

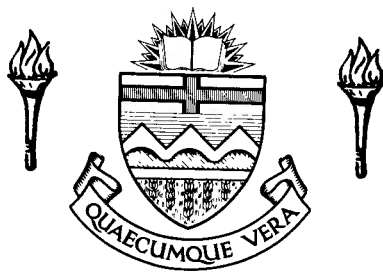
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Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence

EDMONTON HOUSE 1795-1800
CHESTERFIELD HOUSE 1800-1802

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ALICE M. JOHNSON
Archivist, Hudson's Bay Company

LONDON
THE HUDSON'S BAY RECORD SOCIETY
1967

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PREFACE

THE Saskatchewan journals and correspondence printed in this volume take the Hudson's Bay Record Society into a territory and period not previously covered in the Society's publications. The main theme of the volume is the westward advance of the Hudson's Bay Company along the northern and southern branches of the Saskatchewan River at the end of the eighteenth century. The plan of the volume and the choice of documents were made by Professor K. G. Davies, until recently General Editor of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. Among Professor Davies' services to the Society was his success in persuading Miss A. M. Johnson, the Company's Archivist and (since 1948) Assistant Editor of the Society, to write the Introduction to this volume. Miss Johnson's meticulous researches have contributed much to the interest and usefulness of the Society's previous twenty-five volumes; and it is fitting that this volume, which appears near the time of her retirement, should bear her name alone on the title-page.

None of the seven volumes from the Company's Archives which are printed here has been published before, and a description of their physical appearance may be of interest.

The Edmonton House journal and correspondence, 1795-96, by William Tomison is classified B.60/a/1. The manuscript is catalogued on p. 142 of the contemporary 'Inventory of Books &c' (A.64/45), and consists of thirty-three sheets (folios 1-66d.) of unlined paper measuring $15 \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn through the centre into a marbled paper cover. The watermark is an encircled "WA", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. The first two folios are blank. The copies of the 'Country Correspondence' are contained on folios 3-17d. and on folio 18-18d., which is a half-sheet inserted into position with sealing-wax. Folios 19-64 contain Tomison's journal written throughout in the same hand and ending 'William Tomison'. Folios 64d.-66d. are blank. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: 'YF Willm. Tomison Journal &c Inland 1796'.

The Edmonton House journal and correspondence, 1796-97, by George Sutherland is classified B.60/a/2. Receipt of this manuscript in London was recorded on p. 142 of the contemporary catalogue (A.64/45). The copies of the correspondence are entered under the dates the letters were written or received. The manuscript consists of thirty-five sheets (folios 1-70d.) of unlined paper measuring $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn through the centre into a marbled paper cover. The watermark is "FRENCH", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. The first two folios are blank. Folios 3-28 contain

the journal and correspondence written throughout in the same hand and ending 'George Sutherland'. Folios 28d.-70d. are blank. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: 'YF 1797 Geoe. Sutherland'.

The Edmonton House journal and correspondence, 1797-98, by William Tomison is classified B.60/a/3. Receipt of this manuscript in London was recorded on p. 143 of the contemporary catalogue (A.64/45). The manuscript consists of twenty-three sheets (folios 1-46d.) measuring $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{3}{4}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn through the centre into a marbled paper cover. The watermark is "TAYLOR", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. Folio 1 bears the title; folios 2-32d., on which there are guide lines in pencil, contain the journal entries written throughout in the same hand and signed by William Tomison; and folio 33-33d. is blank except for pencilled guide lines. Folios 34-41 contain copies of the correspondence sent from and to Edmonton House. Folios 1d., 41d.-46d. are blank. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: 'YF 1798 Willm. Tomison Edmonton House'.

The Edmonton House journal and correspondence, 1798-99, by William Tomison is classified B.60/a/4. Receipt of this manuscript in London was recorded on p. 143 of the contemporary catalogue (A.64/45). The manuscript consists of thirty-four sheets (folios 1-68d.) of unlined paper measuring $14\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn into a marbled paper cover. The watermark on folios 1-42d., 47-68d. is "JC", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown; and on folios 43-46d. "L MUNN 1794", opposite a crown above a fleur-de-lis and "GR". Folio 1 bears the title; folios 2-43d. contain the journal entries written throughout in the same hand and ending 'William Tomison'; and folio 44 is blank except for pencilled guide lines. Folios 1d., 44d.-46d. are blank; folio 47 is entitled 'Correspondence Book 1799'; folios 47d.-58d. contain copies of the letters received at and sent from Edmonton House, and folios 59-68d. are blank. The contemporary label on the front cover reads: 'YF 1799 William Tomison Journal Edmonton Ho.'.

The Edmonton House journal and correspondence, 1799-1800, by James Bird is classified B.60/a/5. Receipt of this manuscript in London was recorded on p. 143 of the contemporary catalogue (A.64/45). The copies of the correspondence are entered under the dates the letters were written or received. The manuscript consists of twenty-nine sheets (folios 1-58d.) of unlined paper measuring $15\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn into a marbled paper cover. The paper making up this manuscript bears the following watermarks: folios 1-45d., 58-58d., a crown above "GR" and "1796", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown; folios 46-55d., a crown above "GR", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double

circle surmounted by a crown and below the double circle "1794"; folios 56-57d., "L MUNN 1797", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. Folio 1 bears the title and the remarks quoted *infra*, p. 191, n. 1. Folios 2-57d. contain the journal and correspondence written throughout in the same hand; and folios 1d. and 58-58d. are blank. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: 'YF 1800 Journal & Correspondence by Jas Bird Edmonton House'.

The Chesterfield House journal and correspondence, 1800-1, by Peter Fidler is classified B.34/a/2. This manuscript was first catalogued as a separate item and numbered 23 in the 'Catalogue of Library. &c' (A.64/52, p. 34). The manuscript consists of twenty-three sheets (folios 1-46d.) of unlined paper measuring $15\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn through the centre into a marbled paper cover. The watermark is a crown above "GR" and "1796", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. The first two folios are blank. The signed journal and correspondence are in Fidler's writing and cover folios 3-35. Folios 35d.-42 contain meteorological observations, and folio 42d. astronomical observations, both made by Fidler at Chesterfield House and recorded in his writing. Folios 43-45d., 46d. are blank. A note, apparently made in London, on folio 46 reads: 'New Compy. 28th Sept. 1800 6 Octr.; Buffaloes plenty 4th Jany. 1801 9th Feby.; Trade 11th April'. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: '1800/1801 YF Chesterfield House Journal by P. Fidler'.

The Chesterfield House journal, 1801-2, by Peter Fidler is classified B.34/a/3. This manuscript was first catalogued as a separate item and numbered 45 in the 'Catalogue of Library. &c' (A.64/52, p. 35). The journal consists of seventeen sheets (folios 1-34d.) of unlined paper measuring $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, folded to half-size and sewn through the centre into a marbled paper cover. The watermark is a crown above "GR" and "1798", opposite the seated figure of Britannia within a double circle surmounted by a crown. Folio 1 bears the remarks quoted *infra*, p. 293, n. 1. The journal, written and signed by Peter Fidler, covers folios 2-18; folios 1d. and 18d.-25 are blank. Folios 25d.-32d. contain meteorological observations made by Fidler at Chesterfield House and recorded in his writing. Folios 33-33d. and 34d. are blank, and folio 34 carries a table of contents in a different hand. The contemporary label on the marbled front cover reads: 'YF 1801/2 Chesterfield House Journal by Peter Fidler'.

The documents have been edited according to the conventions followed by Professor Davies in Volumes XXIV and XXV. Miss G. Kemp of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives Department assisted generally with the production of the volume.

GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

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INTRODUCTION

I

By the autumn of 1794, a year before the building of the first Edmonton House, one of the many problems facing the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company was the dissension, grown almost beyond control, between William Tomison, the 'Chief', who for a number of years had been stationed inland, and Joseph Colen, the 'Resident' at York Factory.

The Orkneyman, Tomison, was the author of the first, third and fourth journals printed in this volume. Despite the lack of a formal education he had advanced the hard way over a period of twenty-six years (1760 to 1786) from the rank of labourer at £6 per annum to that of Chief at £130 per annum plus £10 for a servant, and plus an annual premium of 3s. od. per score on all skins traded inland and made beaver.¹ This premium raised the credit entry in his salary account to £369 for season 1790-I.² Tomison was an energetic man who never scorned to work with his hands, but he was of uncertain temper both with his trade opponents and fellow officers. Among the latter class were some who accused him of thwarting the extension of the Company's trade into Athabasca.

In 1794 Colen, the educated and articulate Englishman, was about thirty-nine years of age and Tomison's junior by almost twenty years. He was also Tomison's junior in the fur trade by some twenty-five years. After but one year as a writer at York Factory at a salary of £20 he had

¹ R. Glover, editor, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 by Samuel Hearne* (Toronto, 1958), pp. 114-15n.: 'What is meant by Beaver in other kind of furs, must be understood as follows: for the easier trading with the Indians, as well as for the more correctly keeping their accounts, the Hudson's Bay Company have made a full-grown beaver-skin the standard by which they rate all other furs, according to their respective values. Thus in several species of furs, one skin is valued at the rate of four beaver-skins; some at three, and others at two; whereas those of an inferior quality are rated at one; and those of still less value considered so inferior to that of a beaver, that from six to twenty of their skins are only valued as equal to one beaver skin in the way of trade, and do not fetch one-fourth of the price at the London market. In this manner the term "Made Beaver" is to be understood.'

² Hudson's Bay Company Archives A.16/32, fos. 30, 94; A.16/33, fos. 11, 97, 168; A.5/2, p. 268. Subsequent classification numbers refer to Hudson's Bay Company archives. For a biography of William Tomison, see J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934). David Thompson wrote of Tomison, 'He was a truly honest, kind hearted man who would have made a first rate steward, but was not adapted to be at the head of affairs'. R. Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. 52.

been given in 1786, for reasons best known to the London Committee, 'preference of others of much older Date' and appointed 'Resident' at the depot at £40 per annum plus an annual premium of 1s. 6d. per score on all made beaver traded at York and 6d. per score on made beaver sent there from inland. He was, however, subject to orders from Tomison who managed 'the inland Business', that 'being the first consideration'. Under instructions from London Colen had been greatly occupied with the rebuilding of York Factory (destroyed by La Pérouse in 1782), and by 1794 was earning £80 per annum, plus £10 for a servant, and plus a premium of 1s. 6d. per score on the 'made beaver cargo' from York Factory. Unlike Tomison, whose travels in Rupert's Land had been extensive, Colen's had not taken him far beyond the Rock (Gordon House), some 109 miles up Hayes River.¹

The author of the second journal printed herein was the Scotsman, George Sutherland,² whose wide experience of the fur trade was so

¹ The 'lively human Colen', as he was described in 1785 by Humphrey Marten, then Chief at York Factory, had clearly been marked for rapid promotion, for on sending him to the Bay the Committee had referred to his abilities being 'very extensive both in Mechanic & Mercantile Affairs', and to his being 'Master of his Pen in writing and figures'. On receiving the news of his promotion the council at York Factory, according to Marten, became divided on account of his lack of experience in managing Indians. Tomison was ready to waive for a year his right to be Chief if Marten would remain until 1787 but Colen, feeling secure in having Charles Isham as interpreter and the promise of the 'well behaved [John] Ballenden' (p. 172, n. 2) to send George Sutherland from Severn to help him, swore that it would be the worse for all if he were superseded. In the circumstances Marten, a sick man, wisely decided to return to England. Tomison's disagreements with Colen no doubt dated from this time, but he reported favourably on affairs at York Factory during 1786-87. In 1787 Colen sought advice from London regarding the Company's inland servants having goods of French manufacture in their possession when arriving at York Factory and taking back inland large amounts of trading goods as private property. In their 'secret' letter of 21 May 1788 the Committee requested Colen to make further investigations concerning the ways and means used by the men in 'this clandestine trade'. They did not mention the subject to Tomison (who had previously been accused of attempting to smuggle furs) so as 'to avoid Occasioning any Inconvenience' to Colen, but in any case it was unnecessary for them to name the informant because the Company's account books, together with 'Information received from Canada & other Quarters' had given rise to suspicions of irregularity. When sending the results of his enquiries on 29 August following Colen added, 'I am ignorant of what is transacted many hundred Miles distant:— what intelligence I get, is from heresay'. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on Joseph Colen.

² George Sutherland's fur trade experience started in 1774 at Albany Fort where he was servant to the Chief, Thomas Hutchins. Sutherland, who was then about 20 years of age, came from Wick, Caithness, Scotland, and although he had 'received little improvement from Education', he had 'good sence' and was active. He was therefore considered a suitable person to travel inland 'to discover the Country and find out the Track of the Canadians'. The hardships endured during the two seasons (1777-78 and 1779-80) which he spent tenting with Indians appear to have affected his health so much that he was obliged to return home for a year. His second term of service at Albany Fort ended in the summer of 1785 when he took the packet to Severn and, because of the accidental deaths of two Severn men, was unexpectedly detained there to 'deal with the natives' during William Falconer's annual visit to York Fort. Sutherland was employed under Falconer at Severn during season 1785-86 and in the following season (1786-87) was transferred to York Fort by John Ballenden (who succeeded Falconer as Chief at Severn) to assist the inexperienced Joseph Colen as 'Linguist & Trader' (n. 1 above). It was obviously for Colen's benefit that in 1786 George Sutherland compiled 'A Short Vocabulary of the most usefull and comon words in the Northern Indian Language' (B.198/z/1, fos. 129-136). H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on George Sutherland.

generously put at Colen's disposal when he became 'Resident' at York Factory. Colen leaned heavily on his mentor, particularly for information about inland trade. This was because Tomison was secretive about such detail, and at least one of Sutherland's ideas (that of substituting boats for canoes in the Saskatchewan River transport scheme) was adopted by Colen and mentioned to the London Committee as being his own. Sutherland's support of Colen inevitably antagonised Tomison.

The Englishman, James Bird,¹ author of the fifth journal, was but 21 or 22 years of age in 1784 and had before him not only the greater part of his fur trade career, during which the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies were to unite and he was to become a Chief Factor under the Deed Poll of 1821, but also a long period of future service to the Red River Settlement. Bird appears to have got on with, or at least suffered, cross-grained Tomison: but he could do little else in the 1790's if he wanted to remain in the fur trade.]

The fourth in the quartet of authors (the writer of the sixth and seventh journals) was Peter Fidler, another Englishman. In many respects, he was the most interesting of the traders whose careers during 1794 to 1802 are followed in this volume. He joined the Company in the same year as James Bird, 1788, but in somewhat different circumstances. 'Mr Bird' started his career as an officer, although a very junior one dependent upon help from experienced and older men in the lower ranks, but Fidler, with no courtesy title, made his entry into the fur trade by joining as a labourer. Fidler, who came from Derbyshire, was a few years older than Bird and when he joined the Company for five years at £10 per annum (compared with the other's £15 per annum for a like period) was living in Addle Street off Cheapside and within walking distance of Hudson's Bay House.² The circumstances that brought Fidler to London are unknown; all that is certain is that he was on the spot at the right moment. It would have been quite out of character if he had not explored the streets and alleys far beyond Cheapside and perhaps that is how he learnt of the Hudson's Bay Company's need for 'some careful steady Englishmen . . . of fair Character . . . who can bear fatigue' to replace homecoming Orkney

¹ James Bird from Acton, Middlesex, joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a writer in 1788 when about 15 years of age. After working at York Factory for three outfits he went inland with Tomison who considered him 'a very promising young man'. A.30/5, fo. 66. For a biography, see H[udson's] B[ay] R[ecord] S[ociety], Vol. I, E. E. Rich, editor, *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1938, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), p. 429.

² Fidler was born on 16 August 1769, A.36/6. His contract, signed and dated in London on 19 April 1788, is p. 186 in A.32/3. In the Lists of Servants in Hudson Bay, 1793-95 (A.30/6, fos. 37, 84) his home parish was entered as Sutton, Derbyshire. His address in March 1812 was 'Sutton Mill, near Bolsover, Derbyshire'. A.10/1, fo. 107^b.

labourers. Perhaps also it was his curiosity about the distant Indian country which led him to apply for one of the vacancies. On the other hand, sheer necessity may have made him enter the fur trade when, contrary to its usual practice, the Company happened to be seeking new recruits from the City parishes and outskirts.

The request for Englishmen had come from Colen to Thomas Hutchins, the corresponding secretary at Hudson's Bay House and himself a former resident of Hudson Bay. Colen's reason for preferring his own countrymen was because he was suspicious that the Orkneymen under contract were 'too closely connected' with the Canadian opposition inland. Hutchins complied with Colen's request but although an unusually high percentage of Englishmen sailed to Hudson Bay in 1788, only four labourers, including Fidler, were allocated to York Factory and inland.¹ But Fidler was an educated labourer, a fact soon discovered, for by 1789 he was acting as writer to masters of Company posts on the Saskatchewan River. When his contract ended in 1793 the worth to the fur trade of the experience he had gained at York Factory (1788-89), on the Saskatchewan River (1789-90), as Philip Turnor's assistant in Athabasca (1790-92), and when travelling with Indians along the skirts of the Rocky Mountains (1792-93), enabled him to reject a new three-year contract at £15 per annum and to obtain instead one for a similar period at £25 per annum.²

II

Since 1776 Tomison had been directly concerned with the trade along the Saskatchewan River, first as a subordinate and then as Chief, and in 1792 had, with Fidler's help, moved up river from Manchester House³ to make his headquarters at the newly-built Buckingham House.⁴ While he had this move in mind Tomison applied for permission to return to England in 1793, but after taking his cargo of fur down to York Factory in the summer of that year, he turned back inland without waiting for the arrival of the ship bringing the Governor and Committee's reply. In 1794 he did not even go to the Bay-side: instead he returned inland from the Rock⁵ and had the Committee ordered him to sail for London that year he would have been out of reach before the summons arrived at

¹ A.11/117, fo. 9; A.32/3; A.16/33.

² E.3/1, pp. 134-90; E.3/2, pp. 1-75; A.30/6, fos. 37, 84; Tyrrell, *op. cit.*

³ P. 11, n. 1.

⁴ P. 11, n. 3.

⁵ A.6/15, fo. 60; A.5/3, p. 194; B.239/a/95, 4 and 18 July and 11 August 1793; B.239/a/96, 25 and 28 June and 3 July 1794.

York Factory. If Tomison accounted at all for his changed plans it was privately to the Governor and Committee and he may have attributed his immediate return inland to his concern (because of the growing hostility of some of the Plains Indians) for the safety of the few men he could spare for summer duty at the posts on the Saskatchewan. This concern was increased in the summer of 1794 because the plundering of Manchester House¹ in the previous autumn had left no doubts about the Fall Indians' hostile intentions.²

But though Tomison appears to have avoided written explanations in defence of his conduct, particularly that of 1794, Colen often accounted for the actions of others as well as for his own in his York Factory journals.³ Having been nominated by the Committee to succeed as president of the council at York Factory on Tomison's departure for England and, like the Committee, fully expecting that Tomison would certainly go in 1794, Colen made arrangements (which he referred to in his journal) to implement his own plans for directing the inland trade 'with more vigour ... than heretofore'.⁴ Since these plans included changes in the transport system out of York Factory Colen had no option, if he did not wish to wait another year, but to begin putting them into effect that summer so, while Tomison was bringing down the Saskatchewan trade returns for season 1793-94, he went up to the Rock

¹ The hostility among the Prairie Indians towards the fur-traders appears to have begun at the Canadian post in the Eagle Hills in the spring of 1780 when a trader, to ease himself of a troublesome native, gave him in a glass of grog what proved to be an overdose of laudanum. In the resulting fray there were casualties on both sides. The growing hostility towards the traders was halted for a time by the small pox scourge which decimated the Indian population in 1781-82, but it was the traffic in guns which brought matters to a head. The beaver and other prized skins traded by the Crees bought them superiority in arms, and the Fall or Gros Ventres Indians whose wolf and fox skins were of far less value, became their victims. The Fall Indians who therefore considered the traders as allies of their enemies, made an abortive attack in November 1793 on the North West Company's Pine Island Fort (Fort de l'Isle) but succeeded in plundering the Hudson's Bay Company's rival post, Manchester House. These attacks were followed in the summer of 1794 by others on the rival South Branch Houses, when the Hudson's Bay Company lost three men. See p. 11, n. 1; p. 75, notes 2 and 3. Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1939), pp. 62-4; Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (London, [1939]), pp. 455-7.

² French voyageurs along the Saskatchewan had been victims of Indians but Isaac Batt, in the summer of 1791 (not 1792), was the first Hudson's Bay man to be killed. E.3/1, fo. 89d.; Morton, *History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, p. 456.

³ B.239/a/96, etc.

⁴ In his introduction to *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* Dr Glover discusses the events leading up to the Hudson's Bay Company's attempts to compete with the North West Company in Athabasca, and the 'internal four-way conflict within the Hudson's Bay Company - the Saskatchewan vs. Athabasca vs. the Muskrat country vs. Churchill'. The Muskrat country of the fur traders (loosely referred to as 'Nelson River' by Hudson's Bay Company men) extended inland from Hudson Bay some 300 miles. Strictly speaking it lay eastward of Sturgeon-weir River and between the Nelson and Churchill. See Glover, *ibid.*, Chapter III; and Morton, *History of the Canadian West*, pp. 440-1.

'on board the first wooden Craft ['a Batteaux'] that reached this fall'. This unidentified bateau and the recently launched boat *Hope* carried cargoes intended for an expedition to Athabasca. On 23 June ground at the Rock was cleared for the building of Gordon House.¹

Mitchell Oman, leader of the advance flotilla of fur laden canoes from the Saskatchewan District, reached the Rock on the same day and promptly informed Colen 'that the Athapescow Expedition *is entirely knocked on the head*', and that Malchom Ross and David Thompson sent word that it would not be possible 'to carry on that undertaking' so long as Tomison had any power at Cumberland House.² Colen, who had thought the Athabasca expedition safely launched under orders issued by a unanimous York Factory council in 1793, thus learnt that Tomison had set these aside. To add to his annoyance Colen also received from Tomison letters which appeared 'to be written purposely to stop all kinds of Business and throw the concerns of the Company into disorder'. Colen determined to ignore 'the scurility' they contained and to try 'to counteract his deep designs and prevent his carrying his threats into execution, that of giving the utmost trouble to his successor, by putting the Company's affairs into the utmost confusion on his leaving their service'. So, by detailed entries in the journal due to be sent to London at the end of the season, Colen took full advantage of the Committee's recommendation to him in their 'secret' letter of 1788, 'to write your sentiments to Us in the fullest manner from time to time . . . that We may be fully informed of the true state of our affairs'.³

Tomison arrived at the Rock on 25 June. Colen called a council to settle terms for men willing to go to Athabasca and for those wishing to renew expiring contracts. He managed to inaugurate his new transport system, whereby goods taken from York to the Rock by boat would be exchanged there for furs brought from the Saskatchewan by canoe. The canoe-crews would return inland from the Rock. He met with vociferous opposition from the men, but carried his way except with the senior William Flett. Tomison's refusal to discipline Flett and his sudden announcement (when Colen was on the point of leaving for York on 28 June) that he himself would take up the goods and remain inland, made Colen suspect that his return, which started the next day, had been deliberately planned in advance. When Colen and his fellow-councillors⁴

¹ A.6/15, fos. 60, 106; B.239/a/96. The *Hope* carried a cargo of about nine tons, had a draft 'no more than two feet with her full Lading', and a complement of fifteen. See p. 3, n. 3.

² See p. li.

³ P. xiv, n. 1; A.5/2, p. 343.

⁴ B.239/b/79, fos. 1-7d., 22 September 1794. These have been identified as: George Sutherland, John Wright and William Hemmings Cook of York Factory; Thomas Thomas, junior, master and surgeon at Severn; George Taylor, master of the *Beaver* brig; and Captain Henry Hanwell of the

wrote to the Governor and Committee later that season they accused Tomison of having 'set aside at Cumberland House' the Athabasca expedition by 'refusing to pass his word for the advance of Wages promised by the Honourable Committee' and explained that as a counter measure they had adopted a recommendation made by Malchom Ross and David Thompson to approach the objective by the way of the 'Nelson River Track' instead of by the Ile-à-la-Crosse route.¹ To the Committee's criticism, just received by the annual supply-ship, 'that the Majority of Our Council . . . are, or ought to be, competent to render any preconceived measure abortive, let it arise from what Quarter it may', the September council reasonably retorted that it was impossible 'to counteract the proceedings of a superior many hundred miles distant' and added, 'This must be remedied in England – it cannot be done here'. Leaving his staunch supporter, George Sutherland, in charge at York Factory during 1794–95, Colen sailed to London in the *Prince of Wales*, Captain Henry Hanwell, to apprise the Governor and Committee of the 'true state of affairs in this Quarter'.²

III

In 1794, as in other years, the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company took a long summer break from fur trade business and left their small London personnel to catch up on outstanding duties. But in this particular summer the secretary, accountants and warehousekeeper had the additional work of moving house from the north to the south side of Fenchurch Street.³ The newly-leased premises which, in turn, became Hudson's Bay House, were ready for business as usual when the Company's ships, delayed on the passage from Stromness by the necessity of travelling in convoy during this time of war with Revolutionary France, reached the Thames by the second week in November.⁴ Colen's

Prince of Wales. The council called earlier in the season at the Rock was probably attended by Colen, Tomison, and the only other eligible employees (inland masters) then present, viz. James Bird and Charles Isham, and perhaps Mitchell Oman.

¹ B.239/b/79, fos. 2d.–3, 4.

² A.6/15, fo. 109d., 29 May 1794; B.239/b/79, fos. 5d., 7; C.1/737.

³ A.5/3, p. 255. The move provided John Brome, the 'Sub-Accountant', with what was undoubtedly a spare-time chore for successive summers. This was the cataloguing of the Company's records which, during the long tenancy of the house on the north side of the street, had steadily accumulated. In November 1796 Brome received £21 'in consideration of the Labour & Trouble in classing & arranging the Companys Books from the Commencement of the Company & making an Inventory of & Index to the same'. A.1/47, fo. 80. It is highly probable that the slim manuscript volume (A.64/45) entitled 'Inventory of Books, &c.' with its multiple index was the work of John Brome. How many records were destroyed at that time as being no longer necessary or as uninteresting is not known.

⁴ A.1/47, fo. 40d.; A.5/3, p. 255; C.1/397; C.4/1, fo. 15.

problems would obviously have to wait for attention until the annual November election of the Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee was over and arrangements had been made for the disposal of the newly-arrived cargoes of fur and other produce from Hudson Bay.

The election was duly held at the General Court summoned for 19 November and, between 9 a.m. and noon, some fifteen stockholders (including eight of the 1793–94 Board) cast votes in person and eight voted by proxy. This voting pattern varied little from that of preceding and following years. In 1794 only one change in the ranks of those elected in the preceding year was made.

The Company's capital at this time stood at £103,950 and there were about one hundred accounts (including twelve for trusts) entitled to dividends when payable. Those to whom Colen and his colleagues in Hudson Bay were answerable during 1794–95 were the Governor, Samuel Wegg (holding £2482 stock), the Deputy Governor, Sir James Winter Lake (holding £1817 stock), and seven Committee members: Richard Hulse (holding £1800), Joseph Berens, senior (with £2680), Nicholas Caesar Corsellis (with £3000), Edward Hulse (with £1800), Thomas Gould (with £2053), Richard Neave (with £3600), and William Mainwaring (with £1800). The largest amount of stock, £10,020, stood in the name of Abram Newman of London, and the smallest amount, £27, in the name of the deceased William Lake, brother of the Bibye Lake who served as Governor of the Company from 1770–82.¹ For the services they rendered the Governor received annually £250, the Deputy Governor £200, and each Committee member £150.²

The background of the nine men and their successors who administered the Company's affairs on behalf of themselves and the remainder of apparently satisfied, or perhaps apathetic, proprietors during the closing years of the eighteenth century is not only interesting but worthy of notice because of the effect it must have had during a period of ever-growing competition with both the Old and New North West Companies. Family tradition, relationships, and even sentiment must be taken into account. By a patient study of the lists of recipients of dividends the skilled genealogist could undoubtedly extend the family ties about to be mentioned to include 'sisters, cousins and aunts'.

The connection of the Wegg family with the Hudson's Bay Company went as far back as 1697 and had, since 1703, remained unbroken. Samuel Wegg³ inherited half his father's Company stock in 1748 and within a

¹ A.42/2, fos. 41–3; A.44/1, p. 118.

² A.15/15, fo. 303.

³ Samuel Wegg was the second son of George Wegg of Colchester, Essex, Merchant Taylor. In the 1799 transfer of stock referred to above Samuel Wegg was described as 'of Bloomsbury Square late of

few days of buying his brother George's holding in November 1760 was elected to the Committee. Fourteen years later he became Deputy Governor and in 1782 was elected Governor. And when he retired in 1799 the remaining administrators moved up and so created a vacancy for a junior member. The retiring Governor transferred his stock to his son, George Samuel Wegg, who was then elected to the vacancy. Both father and son were barristers-at-law.¹

The Deputy Governor, Sir James Winter Lake, could boast a continuous and quite impressive family connection which had started a few months before d'Iberville's capture of York Fort in 1697 had gravely threatened the future existence of the Company. Lake had been elected to the Committee each year from 1762–81 inclusive and in 1782 had become Deputy Governor, the office he was to hold until 1799 when he succeeded Samuel Wegg.²

The senior Committee member was Richard Hulse of Chesterfield House, Blackheath, Kent, who had been elected each year from 1774 and was to be Deputy Governor from 1799–1801. His family connection dated from 1730 when his father, Dr Edward Hulse (created a baronet in 1739), first acquired the stock which he bequeathed to Richard, his second son, in 1759. Richard, educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, was admitted to the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn in October 1746 and later called to the Bar, but his 'attendance upon Westminster-hall was of short duration'. He appears to have been best remembered as a magistrate of the county of Kent, an office he performed for nearly fifty years, and on his death in 1805 seems to have merited his obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* rather for what he might have accomplished, than for what he actually did during his lifetime.³

Lincoln's Inn Fields', and in his will dated 20 July 1799 and proved 31 December 1802 (London, Somerset House, 1802, Kenyon, 940) as of the parish of Acton, Middlesex. A.1/48, fo. 9d.; A.43/6, fo. 11; H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on Wegg family. There is a silhouette of 'Samuel Wegg Esq. 1795. Governor. Hudson Bay Coy.' in the Beaver House picture collection.

¹ Samuel Wegg was admitted to Gray's Inn on 2 May 1741 and was treasurer of the Society in 1762, the year in which his son, George Samuel Wegg, a graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge, was admitted. A.5/4, p. 80; *Graduati Cantabrigienses* . . . (Cambridge, 1823), p. 503; Joseph Foster, *The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521–1889* (London, 1889), pp. 375, 383.

² See p. xxxi, n. 2. Sir James Winter Lake (c. 1741–1807). The Lake family provided the Hudson's Bay Company with five Deputy Governors. Four of them also became Governors. The first Lake stockholder, Thomas Lake (a Bencher of the Middle Temple), was Deputy Governor, 1710–11; his son, Sir Bibye Lake, 1st Baronet and also a Bencher of the Middle Temple, was Governor, 1712–43; Sir Atwell Lake, 2nd Baronet and eldest son of Sir Bibye, was Governor, 1750–60; Bibye Lake, second son of Sir Bibye and a Bencher of the Middle Temple, was Governor, 1770–82; and Sir James Winter Lake, 3rd Baronet and eldest son of Sir Atwell, was Governor, 1799–1807. H.B.C. Archives Dept. files on Lake family; J. Bruce Williamson, *The Middle Temple Bench Book being a Register of Benchers of the Middle Temple* (London, 1937), pp. 121, 145, 161, 182. There is a silhouette of 'Sir James W. Lake Bt. 1802 Hudson Bay Company Comtte' in the Beaver House picture collection.

³ H.B.C. Archives Dept. files on Hulse family; *Gentleman's Magazine*, Obituary notice, 27 November 1805; *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn*. Vol. I. Admissions from

The second Committee member during 1794-95 was Joseph Berens, senior, of Hextable, Kent, and Devonshire Square, London, who had first been elected to office in 1776. He was a brother-in-law of Edward Hulse, the fourth member of the Committee. The Berens connection with the Hudson's Bay Company went back to at least 1736 when Joseph's father, Hermanus (Herman) Berens of London, merchant, bought cub beaver skins at the November sale of that year. Although Herman Berens acquired stock as early as 1745, another twenty years passed before he first obtained a seat on the Committee. He was senior member when, after being unable to attend any meetings for a year, he retired in 1794. The resulting elevation of the remaining members made way for William Mainwaring as the junior member.¹

Nicholas Caesar Corsellis was the third member of the Committee of 1794-95. His stock, inherited from his mother, had a complicated history, having originally been part of the estate of Sir Stephen Evance who first became Governor of the Company in 1692. Corsellis had served on the Committee since 1778 and in 1801, by steady progression, was to become Deputy Governor and to hold that office until succeeded by William Mainwaring in 1806.²

The fourth member of the Committee, besides being a brother-in-law of the second member, was a nephew of the senior member. As Edward Hulse, Esq., of Aldersbrook near Ilford, Essex, he acquired £1800

A.D. 1420 to A.D. 1799 (Lincoln's Inn, 1896), p. 432. According to 'An Inventory of the Fixtures, Warehouse and Counting house Utensils . . .' in Hudson's Bay House, taken in 1821, the Lely portrait of Prince Rupert (still in the Company's possession) was presented by Mr Richard Hulse in 1794. A.37/43. There is a silhouette of 'Richard Hulse Esq. 1800 Deputy Govr. Hudson Bay Company' in the Beaver House picture collection.

¹ A.1/47, fos. 43d., 44-63d., A.42/2, fos. 41-3. In his will (proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 13 January 1795) Herman Berens was described as of Kevington in the parish of St Mary Cray, Kent. His son Joseph Berens, senior, first acquired Hudson's Bay Company stock on 30 June 1773 and served on the Committee from 1776-95. Joseph married in 1772 Elizabeth, second daughter of Sir Edward Hulse, second Baronet, and their son, Joseph, junior (p. xcvi, n. 5), and grandson, Henry Hulse Berens, were to become future Governors of the Company. H.B.C. Archives Dept. files on Berens family.

² Of Flemish origin, the Nicholas Corsellis, who succeeded to his inheritance in 1727, married in 1741 Frances, daughter of Sir Caesar Child, second Baronet, and by her had two sons, Nicholas and Nicholas Caesar. These sons, the Rev. Nicholas Corsellis of Wivenhoe, Essex, born in 1744, and Nicholas Caesar Corsellis, Esq., of Woodford, Essex, born in 1746, inherited their holdings of Hudson's Bay Company stock from their mother. These holdings, together with that held by Mary, wife of James Fitzgerald (on the Committee, 1767-78), originated from the stock held by Sir Stephen Evance, Governor of the Company 1692-96, 1700-12. He died unmarried and his estate passed to his niece Hester, daughter of John Evance and wife of Sir Caesar Child, second Baronet, mentioned above. H.B.C. Archives Dept. files Corsellis and Fitzgerald families; Thomas Wright, *The History and Topography of The County of Essex* . . . (London, 1836), I, 395-7; John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies* . . . (London, 1844), pp. 112-13, 'Child of Surat'; *The Visitations of Essex* (London, Harleian Society, 1879), Part II, p. 651, Corsellis Pedigree. There is a silhouette of 'Nicholas C. Corsellis Esq. 1796 Hudson Bay Co. Committee' in the Beaver House picture collection.

Hudson's Bay Company stock from his uncle, Richard Hulse, in August 1782 and in the following November was first elected to the Committee. He was to succeed his father (Richard Hulse's elder brother) as third baronet in 1800, and towards the end of 1803, when senior member of the Committee, not only to retire but to assign his stock to his uncle Richard. Although Sir Edward was to become a stockholder again after his uncle's death in 1805, he was to take no further part in the direction of the Company's affairs.¹

Thomas Gould, the fifth member of the Committee during 1794-95, was, like Samuel Wegg and Richard Hulse, a member of the legal profession, and although he acquired his first Company stock in 1749 he did not get a seat on the Committee until 1784. His attendance at meetings was to be consistently regular until ill-health prevented him from succeeding Nicholas Caesar Corsellis as Deputy Governor in 1806. He retired in 1807.²

During his 1794-95 term of office as a Committee member of the Hudson's Bay Company the sixth member, Richard Neave, Esq., of London and Dagenham Park, Essex, was to be created a baronet. He had neither inherited a family interest in the Company nor, like Thomas Gould, been a stockholder of long-standing, having acquired his shares in 1786 and his seat on the Board two years later. During his business career Sir Richard was not only auditor of the public accounts, and chairman of the West India merchants, of the London Dock Company and of Ramsgate Harbour Trust, but also a director of the Bank of England (which he governed, 1783-85) from 1763 until well into the nineteenth century. In this last capacity he shared the responsibility during the period under review of authorising the large overdraft needed by the Hudson's Bay Company each winter until the proceeds from the winter and spring sales of furs and other produce were received. Sir Richard was eventually to become the second member of the Committee and, in 1804, to resign after transferring £1800 of stock to his eldest son, Thomas Neave of Hampstead, so that he could qualify to fill the vacancy left after the usual move up of members on such occasions. Sir Richard Neave, who remained a stockholder until 6 July 1808, sold his remaining amount of £800 to the Company's opponent, Sir Alexander Mackenzie.³

¹ H.B.C. Archives Dept. files on the Hulse family. There is a silhouette of 'Edward Hulse Esq. Director Hudson Bay Company 1795' in the Beaver House picture collection.

² Thomas Gould was the youngest son of Davidge Gould of Sharpham Park, Somerset, and was called to the Bar of the Middle Temple in 1750. He became a Bencher in 1785 and was Treasurer of the Society in 1799. He died 3 April 1808 and was buried in the Middle Temple vault. A.5/4, p. 80; Williamson, *op. cit.*, p. 190. There is a silhouette of 'Thomas Gould Esq. 1801. Director Hudson Bay Coy' in the Beaver House picture collection.

³ A.40/5, fo. 144; A.2/2, fo. 40d.; A.1/47 and 48; A.43/6, fos. 34, 77. Wright, *op. cit.*, II, 433n.;

The seventh and but newly-elected Committee member whom Joseph Colen would have to meet during the winter of 1794-95 was William Mainwaring. He had only recently acquired sufficient stock to qualify for his seat, but by 1806 he was to become Deputy Governor and from 1807 Governor until his death on 6 May 1812. And, like his fellow-directors, he had never set foot in Rupert's Land.¹

IV

There is no record of the discussions Colen had with his employers during the winter of 1794-95 but they clearly included complaints about Tomison obstructing all plans to advance the Company's trade into Athabasca. As Tomison was definitely expected to return to England and presumably, in view of his age, to retire in 1795, the Governor and Committee's solution to the Athabasca problem was to make Colen responsible for the York Factory and inland trade by appointing him Chief Factor at York Factory and raising his salary to £130 per annum plus £10 for a servant, and to order George Sutherland to go inland to manage the Saskatchewan business.² Sutherland had already benefited financially by having his salary raised from £40 to £80 per annum plus £10 for a servant.³ The talks must also have been concerned with the 'Nelson River' area where traders from York and Churchill, to the Company's loss, competed with each other as well as with the North Westers. Thomas Stayner's opinion about the dwindling cargoes exported from Churchill Factory had apparently been made known to the Committee by letter in 1794, but this has not survived. The Committee's reply of 30 May 1795, however, throws some light on it and was, perhaps, influenced by their personal contact with Colen. They

W. Marston Acres, *The Bank of England from Within 1694-1900* (London, 1931), II, 620, 624. A silhouette of 'Sir Richard Neave Bt. Hudson Bay Company 1797' is in the picture collection at Beaver House.

¹ William Mainwaring (1737-1812) was the second son of Edward Mainwaring of Whitmore Hall, Staffordshire. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file. There is a silhouette of 'William Mainwaring. 1810. Governor Hudson Bay Company' in the Beaver House picture collection. William Mainwaring of the Hudson's Bay Company should not be confused with his contemporary of the same name (1735-1821) who became chairman of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions.

² A.6/15, fo. 137d.; A.1/47, fo. 58; A.30/7, fo. 24.

³ A.30/7, fo. 38. No explanation has been found for Sutherland's unauthorised return to England in 1793, four years before the expiry of his contract, but his reasons, or more likely Colen's for sending him, satisfied the Committee because, on 27 February 1794, he was appointed, subject to Tomison's return to England, 'Chief Master Inland' from York Factory at the increased salary mentioned above and an allowance of 1s. 6d. per score of made beaver from 'all the Inland Trade'. In 1795 he was informed that his increased salary took effect as from 1794. This change was obviously made because he had been locum tenens at York in 1794-95 and was definitely expected to be Chief inland as from 1795-96. C.1/736, 737; A.30/5, fo. 80; A.1/47, fo. 30d.; A.5/3, p. 287.

expressed disagreement with Stayner and remarked that though the trade had decreased, his indent was (in proportion) heavier than that for York Factory and his annual returns in furs never equalled his expenses. The 'trading incursions' from Churchill went, they said, too far to the south-west instead of keeping to the northward and so got 'into the Tract of the York Traders'. The difficulty in recruiting servants for Churchill because time-expired men brought home stories of severe treatment, plus the decrease in fur returns (which supported the boasting of the Canadian, Robert Thomson or Thompson, that his trade 'came from the Door of Churchill'), caused the Governor and Committee to warn Stayner that unless he could show better results it would not be possible to maintain Churchill as an independent factory.¹

Because it was expected that on arrival in Hudson Bay Colen would be in full command (and so justify his increased salary), the Committee obviously left him to explain to his council their views and new arrangements for the management of the trade. These matters and others of a general nature usually included in their annual letters to York Factory were omitted from that for 1795 which was addressed to 'Messrs Tomison & Council', and the only reference made to the Athabasca expedition was, 'Obstacles are again, we perceive, thrown in the way . . . but we trust all difficulties which occur and impede the Companys Success will soon be removed'.² But when Colen landed at York Factory on 28 August 1795³ he quickly learnt that again Tomison had upset all future plans and was once more returning to his headquarters at Buckingham House, then the farthest Company post on the North Saskatchewan.

It was at Buckingham House during season 1794-95 that Tomison and thirty-five men had competed against the North West Company partner, Angus Shaw, and 110 men at Fort George.⁴ Tomison's journal for season 1794-95 has not survived, but that kept by Shaw's clerk, Duncan McGillivray,⁵ includes both information and comment on the affairs of the English company. According to this source, Tomison took to Buckingham House in the summer of 1794 only nine canoes of supplies compared with sixteen for season 1793-94 because an expedition had been

¹ A.6/15, fos. 140, 141d., 143.

² A.6/15, fo. 137d.

³ B.239/a/97.

⁴ B.49/f/1, fo. 5, Tomison's 1794-95 'List of mens Names at Cumberland, Neppewan & Buckingham House'. Tomison also noted therein that whereas he took to Buckingham House nine canoes loaded with about 114 pieces of goods each weighing 90 lbs., Angus Shaw took to Fort George sixteen canoes loaded with 375 pieces of goods.

⁵ Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1939).

sent to the 'Rat River':¹ furthermore he did not receive as many additional goods as expected due to the late arrival at York Factory of the ship from England.² From Hudson's Bay Company sources it is clear that transport difficulties and misunderstandings delayed the arrival of the small supplementary supply of goods and caused Tomison to complain in his letter of 12 December to James Bird at 'Nepawi' (without mentioning Colen by name) that the late dispatch of the canoes and 'the detaining the best men at York for other places' was proof of a wish to injure the trade in the Saskatchewan area. 'It's a true observation', he added, 'the Traders from Canada made to us the other day which was that the Hudsons Bay Company carried on this Trade as if it was drawn by a dead Horse' and, referring to the effect of the trade on their remuneration, exclaimed 'God knows our Salarys are little enough when we are supplied with Goods but when we are curtailed of that, it must be still less'.³

Several times during that winter Tomison quarrelled with his Canadian neighbours who claimed always to have come off best. One point of disagreement may have been his refusal to consider joining them in going to extremities to inflict punishment for the attacks on the Pine Island and South Branch Houses⁴ if, as rumoured, the Fall Indians should visit Fort George. The fact that he appeared not to harbour resentment against them was, the North Westers judged, quite out of character. According to them, doing good for evil was not part of a make-up usually concerned with remembering past injuries. But Tomison, for a time at least, seems to have remained firm, for McGillivray later remarked that though it was necessary to 'maintain a respectable character' among Indians, if the Orkneyman could forgive without bloodshed the North Westers could content themselves with obtaining restitution of stolen property.⁵ Differences were laid aside on 22 March 1795 when the North Westers saw clouds of smoke coming from the English fort and hurried to help in extinguishing the fire. Later in the day they received and accepted Tomison's formal letter of thanks and an invitation to spend the evening at Buckingham House. Any blows exchanged that night were between intoxicated Canadians after they had returned to Fort George.

Tomison's position was an unenviable one when Indians began to

¹ This appears to refer to the departure of Malchom Ross and David Thompson for the Reed Lake area. See p. lii.

² Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, pp. 17, 40.

³ B.148/a/1, fos. 30d.-31.

⁴ P. xvii, n. 1; p. 75, notes 2 and 3.

⁵ Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, pp. 56-7, 64. See p. xxxiii.

converge on the rival posts to trade their winter hunts and celebrate with some of the proceeds. McGillivray mentioned '7 different nations' being around at one time and about two hundred men visiting the forts. So far, Tomison had managed to hide from his 'English' Indians the fact that he was short of trading goods, but the deception could not be kept up indefinitely and when they complained bitterly he had the additional annoyance of knowing that the well-stocked North Westers were being extra lavish in their trading so as to make the contrast even more glaring. By this means the 'English' Indians were enticed into Fort George to the detriment of Tomison's immediate and possibly future trade.¹

By 8 May the winter-redundant Canadian servants who had spent the season on the plains returned to Fort George to prepare for the work of transporting the furs to Grand Portage. They had obtained 2000 beaver skins of good quality during their absence and these raised the Fort George returns of trade to 325 packs of 90 lbs. each. In addition there were 300 bags of pemmican. When Angus Shaw left with his brigade on 15 May John McDonald of Garth, James Hughes and twenty-four men remained to spend the summer inland. When Tomison left about the same time he could 'scarcely afford 8 men' to guard Buckingham House and of these, to the amusement of 'the meanest of the Canadians that comes from Canada', only James and Magnus Spence could fire a gun. Tomison reached Cumberland House on 5 June and from there sent his particular share of the 1795 cargo for London in fifteen canoes under the care of James Bird (who took 'the Head of one himself') to York Factory.² To Colen, whom he thought was at York, Tomison wrote on 10 June complaining bitterly not only about the small quantity and bad quality of the trading goods he had received for season 1794-95, but

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 72, 75.

² Only the total figure of the Saskatchewan River fur returns for season 1794-95 is known. This was 16,417 made beaver, according to B.239/b/79, fo. 8. The posts from which this quantity came were: (1) Cumberland House, where the experienced steersman, canoe-builder and carpenter, Magnus Twatt, was in charge (B.49/a/26, B.49/f/1, fo. 3); (2) 'Nepawi' or present-day Nipawin, where James Bird built in opposition to the North Wester, Louis Chastelain, and also competed against David Grant's men (B.148/a/1; Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*); and (3) Buckingham House. In addition, in 1795 there were for export to London 1997 made beaver from the Swan River District. B.239/b/79, fo. 8. This figure was made up from the unknown quantities traded by Charles Thomas Isham and Henry Hallett at (1) Swan River House near Swan Lake (E.3/2, fo. 42d., G.2/19); and (2) a post built in 1794 and during the ensuing season called first 'Tilberry' House and then Marlborough House (see p. xxxvi, n. 2). In the Swan River District Isham and Hallett competed not only against a Mr Thorburn (presumably William Thorburn of the North West Company), but also against their own colleagues from Albany Factory. These were Robert Goodwin at Brandon House and John Sutherland at Shell River. The Albany men estimated that there were no fewer than twenty-three 'Different Houses' on and in the Red [Assiniboine] River area. B.213/a/6, 30 September 1794; B.203/a/1, 5 October 1794; E.3/2, fo. 43d.; B.203/a/1, 20 and 23 January, 2 February, 2 March 1795. Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, p. 58.

about the 'miserable set of men' who had been sent to replace the 'principal hands taken from Inland' in 1794. 'The trade will dwindle to nothing' was his gloomy forecast.¹

As the weeks passed George Sutherland (anticipating Colen's return to, and Tomison's departure from, Rupert's Land in the late summer of 1795 and going inland himself to manage the trade) began to suspect that the Orkneyman had no intention of going home. Sutherland was right and was greatly disappointed at losing an opportunity of carrying out changes in transport and trying 'to bring the Men to proper order', both matters against which Tomison 'set his face'.²

Tomison's explanation for returning inland, if ever made, must have been given to the Governor and Committee when he eventually arrived in London in 1796. It was no doubt based on his suspicions of Angus Shaw's intentions and omitted any admission of jealousy on his own part at the thought of handing over command to Colen and George Sutherland, both of whom he disliked. Tomison's suspicions of the North Wester's intentions were not unfounded. Before Shaw took out his 1794-95 returns of trade to Grand Portage he arranged for a new post for trading with the beaver-hunting Crees, and the Assiniboines and Sarcees, to be built further up the Saskatchewan 'on a spot called the Forks, being the termination of an extensive plain contained between two Branches of this River'. Fort George was to be retained for the convenience of the Gens du Large. Duncan McGillivray, who recorded this intention, continued:

This diversion of the Indians will be doubly advantageous . . . both with respect to augmenting the usual returns & taking the natives out of the reach of any opposition, (except the English) for the ensuing Winter at least:— Even the English themselves will labour under considerable disadvantage, for the first year, with respect to every preparation necessary for the establishment of a Post, such as buildings &c, for it is carefully concealed from every person that a step of this kind is intended.³

Tomison knew where the North Westers would settle if they went higher up the Saskatchewan because both companies had looked for

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 78-9; B.239/b/58, fo. 73d.; B.49/a/26; B.239/b/58, fos. 73-4.

² A.5/3, p. 287; B.239/a/97, 13 July and 17 August 1795.

³ Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, pp. 77-8. Shaw's intentions were obviously suspected and reported to George Sutherland at York Factory when Bird arrived there with the Saskatchewan fur returns. On 20 July, when Sutherland had not entirely lost hope that he would be in charge on the Saskatchewan River during season 1795-96, he sent Bird to Buckingham House with instructions to leave the summer master in charge there and to follow 'the Canadian Traders'. B.239/b/58 fos. 75-6.

suitable sites in 1793. He himself had sent Peter Fidler on this assignment but was sparing of detail about it in the Buckingham House journal, though he did mention that Fidler left on 1 April accompanied by Mr Thomas (the surgeon, Thomas Thomas, junior), William Flett and John Ward. The last-named got lost but managed to get back to the house. Tomison also remarked that when the others returned on 11 April they reported that 'what was supposed to be a branch' was only '2 small rivers, that falls into the Saskatchewan river about 12 miles distance from each other',¹ namely the present Redwater and Sturgeon Rivers.

The only known account of the journey written by Fidler himself is that which is included in one of the '4 or 5 Vellum bound Books, containing fair copies' of the narratives of his journeys which he bequeathed to the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.² The narrative of the journey under discussion is contained on paper water-marked 1794, but it was certainly edited and written later than the building of Acton House in 1799 because that occurrence is referred to in it as follows: 'in the Year 1790 . . . Mr Pangman & Co. . . . proceeded up the Saskatchewan about 7 miles higher than where Acton House was built belonging to us in the Year 1799'.³ This 'Journal of a Journey by Land along the North Side of the Saskatchewan River & up it to the Tea Sturgeon or Red Willow River by Peter Fidler' opens on Monday, 1 April 1793, with the remark: 'The Canadians speak of going higher up the Saskatchewan River to build induced Mr Tomison to send me up there, & see where would [be] the most eligible spot to build at should the Canadians go there', and gives a full account of the party's movements during the trip. A journey of about 130 miles on horseback in seven days along the north shore of the Saskatchewan brought Fidler and his two remaining companions, Thomas and Flett, to 'the Bank of the Tea river or Red willow creek sometimes called the Sturgeon river' on 7 April.⁴ Fidler continued:

This Sturgeon or Tea River is the end of our Journey but not a proper place to build at owing to the small woods that are here, a few pines along the Banks, in the Year 1795 Edmonton House was built which is about 1 mile higher up the Saskatchewan river than the mouth of this river, about a South Course, no wood to build with there but what was rafted down the river, also the Firewood.

¹ B.24/a/1.

² A.36/6.

³ E.3/2, p. 74.

⁴ For the route followed 1-7 April, see J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966), pp. 88-9. Fidler's estimate of the length of the journey so far was 145 miles. E.3/2, pp. 70-5.

Next day, on the journey back, Fidler met Angus Shaw (accompanied by four men) who was going to where the English party had been so that he, too, could find 'a place to build at'. There the matter rested until the summer of 1795.

V

Although Tomison made no reference in his journal for the summer months of 1795 to the North Westers building higher up the Saskatchewan, it is unlikely that he was completely ignorant of their movements, but because he had only a few men inland he could not immediately stretch his line of communication beyond Buckingham House. Therefore it was not until after a busy but uneventful summer at Cumberland House that he started up the river on 4 September, he himself steering one of the five canoes which formed part of his brigade: the other four had left a day earlier. En route, below the Crossing Place, he left James Sandison with two companions and one canoe-load of goods to build the first of the Saskatchewan River posts to be named Carlton House,¹ and on Sunday, 27 September at 11 a.m., two days in advance of Angus Shaw (who had 105 men and eighteen heavily-laden canoes), arrived at Buckingham House. By the evening of 30 September five half-laden canoes had been sent up the river to where Tomison intended to build in opposition to Shaw, and the 'dry goods' and horses had been crossed to the south bank of the Saskatchewan so that he and eight companions could follow by land the next day.

On 5 October, about one mile or more above Fidler's turning-point of 1793 (and a little below present-day Fort Saskatchewan), Tomison arrived seven hours later than his canoes opposite to where James Hughes had built the first Fort Augustus.² In hot, fine, weather on the next day all the goods were carried to the north side of the river. As Fidler had truly reported, there was no wood for building in the vicinity, so, at great inconvenience and trouble, it had to be obtained from higher up the river and floated downwards. On 9 October, the man unequalled for ingenuity in the Company's territory, Gilbert Laughton,³ began hewing

¹ Three Hudson's Bay Company posts named Carlton House were established in 1795. They were sited: (1) on the North Saskatchewan River; (2) on the Assiniboine River (p. xxxvi, n. 2); and (3) on Pukatawagan Lake, Manitoba (built by William Linklater, the Churchill inland trader). Also, for reference to a post inland from Eastmain Factory known as Carlton House for a short time at the turn of the century, see *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XXIV, K. G. Davies and A. M. Johnson, editors, *Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence 1819-35* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1963), p. 305.

² P. 12, n. 1.

³ P. 13, n. 3.

posts and four days later Tomison recorded 'began the building'. His post was within musket-shot of Fort Augustus.¹ The normal trading post chores and dealings with Indians were carried on at the same time and successive days of 'clear weather' must have been thankfully accepted by men who were anxious to have a roof over their heads before the onset of winter. By 12 November, three days after driving ice in the river had held up communication with the south shore, one turf-covered, parchment-windowed, dwelling-house, 60 × 24 feet and 17 feet high, and another 32 × 18 feet and 16 feet high housed the Hudson's Bay Company's new headquarters on the Saskatchewan River. Whenever possible work both inside and outside continued. For instance, the trading-room and master's apartment were partitioned; and on 23 November, in 'thick rimy weather' with a northerly breeze, when four men were sawing planks for boards, 'the rest' (an unknown number) brought home the flagstaff of sixty feet or more. This was erected on 7 December. By the 20th the front and one side of the houses had been stockaded.

Tomison's journal for season 1795-96 is silent on many subjects and only the weather, as in the majority of post journals, is mentioned regularly. Even the naming of this furthest post on the North Saskatchewan River went unrecorded. We can only assume that Tomison named Edmonton House after the Middlesex parish in which the Deputy Governor, Sir James Winter Lake, had his home,² and from which the Saskatchewan apprentice, John Peter Pruden (who was stationed at Carlton House during 1795-96) came.³ Nor did Tomison provide a list of the men who made up the winter complement of Edmonton House, but casual references in his journal can be found to seventeen who appear to have spent long periods at the new post.⁴ Without exception Tomison and the seventeen men named were Orcadians and it is highly probable that the remaining eighteen or twenty men also came from the Orkney Islands.⁵ There is nothing surprising in Edmonton House being manned

¹ From John McDonald of Garth's 'Autobiographical Notes 1791-1816' in L. R. Masson, editor, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* . . . (Quebec, 1890), II, 23. McDonald, writing in his old age, erred about the date of establishment. For Peter Fidler's estimates of the distance from Buckingham House, see p. xxix, n. 4; p. 13, n. 2.

² Sir James Winter Lake 'had a seat at Edmonton called "The Firs", which has been some years pulled down'. William Robinson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Edmonton, in the County of Middlesex* . . . (London, 1819), p. 72.

³ B.27/a/1. See *infra*, p. 39, n. 4.

⁴ Tomison named them: Gilbert Laughton, John Mowat, Magnus Spence, Robert Garson, George Spence, John Flet, Thomas Taylor, Robert Garrock, George Gutcher, Nicholas Allen, James Hourie, Alexander Flet, Nicholas Leith, William Tate, George Gun, John Paplay, and James Hutchins.

⁵ Tomison named in alphabetical order in his 'List of Mens Names at Cumberland, Neppewan [Carlton House] Buckingham and Edmonton Houses [1795-1796] seventy men besides referring to

entirely, or almost entirely, by Orcadians because, of the 132 men listed as having been sent inland from York Factory to be dispersed among about twelve posts during outfit 1795-96, 119 came from the Orkney Islands, 1 from the Scottish mainland, 9 from England and 3 from Rupert's Land.¹

Tomison made but few references to his neighbours and those few were uncomplimentary. The North Westers had expected to be followed by the English company but, on 3 November, to Tomison's disgust and no doubt also to Angus Shaw's, 'two canoes of the Grants Company' arrived to join in the competition.² Tomison's third rival (not mentioned by name but no doubt included in the general description of 'Canada Companies' in his journal entry for 5 October 1795) seems to have been François Beaubien or his representative who, according to Fidler, took away four packs of furs in 1796.³ Shaw was later to complain that in the spring of that year Tomison

bestowed his Confidence & Advice upon our common Opponents
those Interlopers of Trade who like the Locusts of Egypt bring

George Sutherland, James Bird, and John Wright, but he did not mention the posts at which they wintered. B.49/f/2. In the following outfit (1796-97) 139 men were sent inland from York Factory and dispersed among about twelve posts. Of this number 35 wintered at Edmonton, 29 at Buckingham House, 13 at Carlton House, and 7 at Cumberland House, making a total of 84. B.49/a/27b., fo. 57; infra, p. xl, n. 1; p. 65, notes 3 and 1; p. 64, n. 6.

¹ A.30/7, fos. 29-39. Of the 119 Orcadians only five were 'officers', viz. William Tomison (Edmonton), Mitchell Oman (Saskatchewan Pilot), James Tate (Cross Lake), Malchom Ross (Fairford House), and William Sinclair, 1st (Wegg's House). Of the remaining men entitled to the prefix 'Mr', one (Charles Thomas Isham) was born in Rupert's Land and spent most of season 1795-96 at Carlton House on the Assiniboine; one (George Sutherland) was from Caithness and had charge of Cumberland House; one (John Wright, surgeon) was from Surrey and wintered at Cumberland; one (Peter Fidler) was from Derbyshire and wintered with Isham; and six came from in or near London. The six were disposed of as follows: James Bird in charge of Carlton House, Saskatchewan River, with John Peter Pruden as apprentice; James Swain in charge of Buckingham House; Henry Hallett in charge of Somerset House, Swan River District; David Thompson in charge of Duck Portage post; and James Peter Whitford in charge at Gordon House (when open). Of the rest of the inland complement of 132, two servants came from Rupert's Land and one from Yorkshire. For Dr Richard Glover's remarks on the employment of Orkneymen by the Hudson's Bay Company, see his introductions to *H.B.R.S.*, XIV and XV, E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, editors, *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journal 1775-82* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1951 and 1952).

² Grant's representative at Edmonton was apparently a Mr King. See p. xxxvii. David and Peter Grant's short-lived partnership was formed in 1793. They were supplied by William Robertson and Partners of Montreal and supported by Schneider in London. Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, *passim*; Elaine Allan Mitchell, 'The North West Company Agreement of 1795' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1955), Vol. XXVI, p. 130; *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XXII, E. E. Rich, *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870*, II, 196; W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 431-2, 449, 451, 453.

³ P. xxxvii. Beaubien, according to Elliott Coues (*New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest* (New York, 1897), Vol. I, p. 244, n. 21), was associated with Laviolette in opposition to the North West Company in 1794. A François Beaubien was a partner in the Detroit firm of Leith, Jamieson & Co. which joined forces with the Montreal firm of Forsyth, Richardson & Co. in 1798 to form the New North West Company. Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 158, 163.

Devestation & Ruin along with them wherever they Winter & whom we have now happily expelled at an enormous Expence though you enjoy an equal Share of the benefit of their absence from the Country.¹

Tomison also omitted to record that he had, according to one of his officers, a disagreement (which later threatened to develop into a quarrel) with John McDonald of Garth² because he, Tomison, had experienced a change of mind about allowing the Fall Indians to go unpunished for their crimes at the South Branch House. This disagreement must have happened early in October 1795 before Shaw's arrival at Fort Augustus. It arose out of Tomison's request, which McDonald refused, 'to surrender up the Indians' concerned. In 1796 the York Factory council was told that the North Wester had replied, 'it was not for the paltry Consideration of the Loss of three of the Hudson's Bay Company's Servants that he would lose the Trade of so valuable a Tribe of Indians'.³ McDonald's version of the affair of 1795 is to be found in a letter to Colen dated Fort George, 24 May 1797. In this McDonald agreed that the tribe in general deserved punishment but disapproved of Tomison's 'mode of executing it from a Conviction that Savages had no Idea of quietly surrendering themselves up to Justice . . . that consequently they would treat his proposition with Disdain & Contempt'. McDonald continued:

The only Alternative therefore was to attack them in their Camp . . . & obtain by violence what he [Tomison] could not effect by Negotiation which might have been done without any immediate Danger . . . instead of this or some other vigourous step of revenge he allowed them quietly to remain at the Fort & afterwards to depart . . . I deny that he ever asked my Assistance moreover I could prove incontestibly from many of his Conversations preceding that Period that he himself never entertain'd a Steady resolution of proceeding to Violence . . . his Conduct upon this Occasion was evidently irresolute & Wavering & he seemed entirely at a loss how to Act as if his resentment has been restrained by his natural

¹ B.239/b/59, fo. 27d., Angus Shaw to Joseph Colen, dated Fort Augustus, 10 May 1797.

² Described by Angus Shaw in his letter to Joseph Colen of 10 May 1797 (above) as, 'a young Man of a respectable family and Genteel Connections . . . incapable of any thing that is mean ungenerous or unmanly'.

³ B.239/b/57, fo. 26d., Joseph Colen to the 'North West Proprietors', dated York Fort, 16 July 1796. Colen was corresponding with Angus Shaw and his colleagues on the subject of his own refusal to deliver to the North Westers the Indian murderers of Robert Thomson (or Thompson) who were incorrectly said to be sheltering at York Factory or one of its dependent posts. P. lvii, n. 3.

Pusillanimity apprehension of presant danger & future consequences
or a certain restriction From his Orders which deprived him of the
power of retaliating upon the delinquents.

He ended on a characteristic note:

Mr Tomison may rest assured that since Our disparity of Age has
proved no detriment to his injuring me it will afford him no
protection against my resentment & that at our first meeting he
will be compelled to retract what he has advanced or [be] punished
severely for his obstinacy.¹

Writing from memory in his old age McDonald described how he himself
made peace with the Fall Indians and ended, 'I saved his [Tomison's] life
afterwards by seizing upon an Assiniboile's Gun, when in the act of
shooting him'.²

Angus Shaw supported his young colleague in a letter to Colen from
Fort Augustus dated 10 May 1797. When referring to the disagreement
of October 1795 Shaw made a vituperative attack on Tomison for his
'diabolical malevolence against all Man kind' and claimed that the
Orkneyman had misrepresented McDonald and his attitude to the South
Branch House murders. Shaw commented in his high-flown style that
while Tomison had been in command along the Saskatchewan River
'unanimity & Good Neighbourhood had forsaken it, & taken their
abode in more happy climes & fell discord reigned without controul in
these extensive regions'. He then squarely laid the blame for the South
Branch House disaster on Tomison, alleging that an agreement they had
reached in the winter of 1793-94 to abandon operations on the South
Saskatchewan had been broken by him, thus making it necessary for the
North Westers to remain also in an area made dangerous because of
disturbances between the Indians. Shaw further remarked that in the
spring of 1796 he sent proposals to Tomison recommending that the
people at the two settlements (i.e. at Fort Augustus and Edmonton
House and at Fort George and Buckingham House) should retire into one
fort at each place during the ensuing summer, but that he had met 'with
Indifference & Contempt altho it was evidently calculated for the future
Security of Lives & property during the period that we are most exposed
to the Depredations of the Natives'. He self-righteously pointed out that

¹ B.239/b/59, fos. 29-29d.

² The quotation is from McDonald's 'Autobiographical Notes' (Public Archives of Canada) written in his old age. See Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, Appendix, pp. 2-3. The account of the disagreement between McDonald and Tomison is omitted from the 'Autobiographical Notes' printed in L. R. Masson, editor, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec 1889), Vol. II.

his proposal did not proceed from necessity for he could 'leave four Men to his [Tomison's] one without diminishing the Complement requisite for navigating the Canoes'.¹

The Edmonton House complement during the summer of 1796 was indeed a small one, being made up of Alexander Flet, the apprentice John Peter Pruden (nominally in charge), Oman Norquay and four other men.² Tomison's fur returns amounted to 8226 made beaver and on reaching Buckingham House on his downward journey he collected another 2200 which had been traded there by James Swain who, on 27 May, joined the out-going brigade of fourteen canoes manned by thirty-four men and 'the old boat' loaded with 4800 lbs. of pemmican and some lumber. Tomison left James Gaddy, senior, in charge at Buckingham House for the summer with seven unidentified companions. By the time the augmented brigade reached Carlton House on 1 June Tomison found that Bird had already left with his trade returns of 1406 made beaver, having closed his post and left his remaining trade goods in the care of his Canadian rivals.³ On 4 June Tomison reached Cumberland House, where the disappointed George Sutherland had wintered with John Wright, surgeon, Mitchell Oman, guide, and eight men,⁴ and there added 1146 made beaver to the out-going cargo. According to Peter Fidler,⁵ Sutherland's 1795-96 rival had been one 'Sherat' (possibly identical with the North Wester, Pierre Charette, who was stationed in the 'Rocky Mountain Department' in 1799),⁶ but his trade must also have been affected by that made by his rivals, 'Mr Portee' and 'Cosley', at The Pas, as well as by an unidentified 'Mr McLead' on Carrot River.⁷ The Saskatchewan River returns therefore totalled 12,978 made beaver.⁸ This figure was lower than that for outfit 1794-95 and was 'occasioned by the small assortment of Trading Goods sent to the Upper Settlements' in the summer of 1795.⁹

¹ B.239/b/59, fos. 26d.-27d.

² P. 39 and n. 4. Pruden, who had wintered at Carlton House, went to Edmonton House in May 1796.

³ P. 9, n. 5; p. 40, n. 3.

⁴ B.49/a/27^a, fo. 2d.

⁵ See p. xxxvii.

⁶ Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), Vol. III, p. 933.

⁷ P. xxxvii.

⁸ The fur returns (in made beaver) sent to London from York Factory in 1796 are to be found in the York Factory account book, B.239/d/108, fo. 64. For the figures for the years 1796 to 1802 inclusive, see *infra*, Appendix A.

⁹ See p. xxvii, n. 2. B.239/b/79, fos. 12-16d., Joseph Colen and council (including William Tomison) to the Governor and Committee dated 'York Fort Hudsons Bay', 6 September 1796. Tomison in person, it stated, would explain about the shortage of trading goods (fo. 12d.).

The trade (2110 made beaver)¹ from the other area directly under Tomison's control, the Swan River District as it was loosely termed, was somewhat better than in the preceding season in spite of only a small assortment of trading goods being received there and Charles Isham having to meet competition at two main posts² from 'no less than Seven Different houses'.³ But it was a hard-won trade by Isham and Henry Hallett and made even more costly by one of the rival posts having been built by John Sutherland from Albany Factory. This rival post, referred to in the Company's records as the Elbow or Indian Elbow Post, was, as its name implies, situated at the elbow of the Assiniboine River and, according to Peter Fidler, was 'about EbN 15 Miles' from Carlton House and about half-a-mile above the first Marlborough House built by Isham in 1793.⁴ Isham, who remained inland while Hallett took out the returns of trade, warned Colen that John Sutherland had had two bateau-loads of trading goods during season 1795-96 and that he expected to return with at least four bateau-loads next season. The Assiniboine River trade Isham remarked

can be carried on to much greater advantage from Albany than York as they land their Goods by Water at their Door & we have at least

¹ B.239/d/108, fo. 64.

² Swan River House was hardly more than a transport depot. Fidler remarked (E.3/2, p. 86, 19 October 1795), 'very few Indians now visit that House [Swan River] . . . but [it] is absolutely necessary to remain at [it] to keep the Goods & Furs in as no water conveyance is betwixt the Houses very little more than will float an Indian canoe all the Goods are either carried on horseback in the Summer or while the Snow is not too deep & then conveyed on small sledges dragged by dogs. The Furs & all the dry Provisions for the passage down to the Factory is also conveyed overland in the above manner'. During season 1795-96 the two main Swan River District posts were: (1) Somerset House (the current name for 'Tilberry' or Marlborough House built in 1794) where Henry Hallett and five men were stationed; and (2) Carlton House, a new post built by Charles Isham and Peter Fidler and their complement of ten on the south side of the Assiniboine River, about 150 yards from that of the North Wester, 'Mr Falcon'. E.3/2, pp. 84-8; B.28/a/1.

³ B.28/a/1, fo. 27. Six opposition traders have been identified. They were, in the Somerset House area: Pierre Belleau of the North West Company and 'Dayzaddo' master for a 'new Company . . . called the South Company'. In the Carlton House area they were: Pierre Falcon or Faucon, senior, and Mr Coller (Collae or Collaire), both of the North West Company; Peter Grant, 'one of a new company that first came into this interior part of the Country 2 years ago'; and John Sutherland of the Hudson's Bay Company. The seventh and unidentified trader of the South Company was mentioned by Fidler (who is the authority for this information) as being in the neighbourhood of Swan River House. E.3/2, pp. 84-8; B.28/a/1, 29 October 1795; B.159/a/2. For references to Belleau, Falcon and Coller, see Coues, *op. cit.*, I, 293n, and III, 935-6.

⁴ E.3/2, p. 88; B.28/a/1, 21 October 1795. The untitled and undated MS map, G.2/19 (which can be fairly safely attributed to Peter Fidler), marks: (1) the site of the 1793 Marlborough House on the south side of the Red [Assiniboine] River at the elbow (so far as can be judged) at approximately latitude 51° 47', longitude 101° 55'; (2) the site of the 1794 Marlborough House (but giving it its later name of Somerset House) north of Swan River to the east of Thunder Hill at approximately latitude 52° 3', longitude 101° 19'; and (3) Carlton House on the south bank of the Assiniboine at approximately latitude 51° 47', longitude 102° 20'. Fidler's 'Journal from the Long Point Cedar Lake, to Swan River House, Somerset & Carlton Houses, also the upper Parts of the Red River, in [3-22 October] 1795' is in E.3/2, pp. 76-88.

120 Miles to transport every thing overland, this Summer the Canadians are going to build about 40 Miles higher up the River than before. Therefore I think the men who have been stationed at Swan River could be employed with much more advantage to the Company by sending them up the Saskatchewan or to the Northward.¹

Peter Fidler, having spent the season with Isham and Hallett in the so-called Swan River District, came out to take charge at Cumberland House during the summer of 1796. If he ever made an official copy of his journal from 23 May to 27 September it has long since disappeared, but the 'rough' version² has survived and on the opening page contains the following information about the trade made by the rival companies in the area which came directly under Tomison's supervision:

Number of Packs made at the different Settlements in
the Saskechewan River [1795-]1796

No. of Canoes		Packs
9	{ Edmonton House by Mr Tomison	122
	{ Buckingham House by Spense Gaddy & Swain	91
18	At the above places by Mr Shaw & Mcdonald	364
3	Nippowee by Mr Bird	31
	Do by Mr McGillis	27
9	Do by Mr Finlay & Chestelain	58
3	{ Do by Bobean [Beaubien]	9
	{ Edmonton House by Do	4
2	Do by King	31
2	Cumberland House by Mr [George] Suth[erlan]d	30
1	Do by Sherat	2
2	Pasquia by Mr Portee	15
2	Do by Cosley	12
6	Carrot river by Mr McLead	28
		Packs [illegible]
		cont.—

¹ B.239/b/58, fos. 94d.-95.

² B.49/a/27^b. This was given to Dr J. B. Tyrrell of the Geological Survey of Canada in the early 1900's by the officer in charge of York Factory. Dr Tyrrell returned it to the Company in 1952.

Number of Packs made at the different Settlements in
the Saskechewan River [1795-]1796 *cont.*—

No. of Canoes			Packs
3	Swan river	Mr Isham	42
4		Belleau	61
2		Dizido	9
3	Red [Assiniboine] River	Falcon Carlton House	35
2		P. Grant	20
2		Coller	9
2 Boats		J[ohn] Sutherland	19
			<hr/> 195 <hr/>

Tomison, having neither reason nor excuse for delaying longer at Cumberland House, eventually left for York Factory and London on 25 July. Somewhere near where the future Oxford House was built he met George Sutherland going, at last, as Chief to the upper Saskatchewan. What they had to say to each other went unrecorded, but Robert Longmoor, one of Sutherland's party, wrote to Colen, 'our meeting was not so agreeable as I could have wished for when Mr Sutherland offered to shake hands with him he refused'.¹

VI

George Sutherland went inland in 1796 full of enthusiasm at the prospect of at last being able to build boats for future use along the waterway beyond Gordon House and, as they were a more economic form of transport than canoes, to gain more control over servants who had become increasingly independent during a period of great scarcity of labour. The threat of redundancy would, it was hoped, act as a brake to their growing demands for higher wages and be a reminder that the alternative to working in Rupert's Land was either unemployment at home or, more likely, service in the Royal Navy under harsh wartime conditions.

His daily record of the journey up the Saskatchewan River and of his

¹ B.239/b/58, fo. 112.

residence at Edmonton House during season 1796–97 is no more informative than Tomison's for the previous outfit, but it gives the impression that he got on better with his North West Company rivals (his only opponents) than did his predecessor. This impression is confirmed by Angus Shaw who, in a letter to Joseph Colen dated Fort Augustus, 10 May 1797, remarked that the 'discordant times' of season 1795–96 had been succeeded by 'a short Interval of Unanimity & good understanding between the Houses' and that

the Trade is carried on now with the utmost Harmony without prejudice or Disadvantage to either party the good Effects of this happy Change are already visible all over this Quarter mutual offices of friendship & assistance have taken place & the Indians behold with regret a Confidence & good understanding which (if continued) will reduce them to proper subjection in a short time. To contribute as much as possible to this Concord I have made all the Bungees pay their Credits to Mr Sutherland exceeding 150 Skins A sacrifice that Mr Tomison with all his animosity & rancour could never have extracted from me for last year a few of that tribe who winter'd here did not pay a tenth part of their Credits to him a Circumstance that Mr Swain can testify. Upon the whole it is our ultimate wish that Mr Sutherland or some other honest upright Character should always Command in [t]his Department. We recommend this as a means of putting the Country in a proper footing of compelling the Natives to pay more respect & attention to the Whites than they have hitherto done & finally of conferring security on the Lives & property of those who frequent these barbarous Regions.¹

The only outstanding event at Edmonton House during season 1796–97 was the visit during the middle of December of more than four hundred Fall Indians who obviously arrived in such force because they still had reason to fear an unfriendly reception from the English company. But Sutherland, bearing in mind the Governor and Committee's instructions to 'let no means be lost in trying to reconcile those natives with our Servants',² enlisted and received the support of Angus Shaw and the rest of the North Westers at Fort Augustus when forgiving the Indians for past crimes and threatening retribution should any future ones be committed.

Sutherland had a complement of thirty-four at Edmonton House and all, with the exception of himself and John Peter Pruden, were

¹ B.239/b/59, fo. 27d.

² A.6/15, fo. 138d., 30 May 1795.

Orkneymen.¹ The approach of the buffalo after the onset of cold weather enabled him to get provisions in plenty, both for immediate use and for making into pemmican not only for summer consumption at Edmonton House but for the next expedition towards Athabasca.² A severe winter was followed by an unusually late spring; as a result the annual canoe-building operations were held up and Sutherland was delayed not only in sending off the fur returns from Edmonton but in leaving there himself. On Monday, 15 May 1797, he handed his charge to Alexander Flet who, with eleven men, was to spend the summer at Edmonton House, and having traded 12,500 made beaver (a figure which might have been higher but for a sickness among the beavers),³ was reasonably satisfied when he left the same day on the first stage of his journey to York Factory.

To the 12,500 odd made beaver traded at Edmonton House during 1796-97 Sutherland added 2791 obtained by Peter Fidler at Buckingham House, 1963 traded by James Bird at Carlton House, and 559 by Mitchell Oman at Cumberland House.⁴ Because Sutherland found it impossible to man the canoes and boats for the transport of this cargo down to York and also leave sufficient men behind to protect Edmonton and Buckingham Houses, he was obliged to close the latter post for the summer. The trade goods left on hand were sent to Edmonton House and Angus Shaw's offer of his summer servants at Fort George keeping an eye on Buckingham House was accepted.⁵ But it was possible to keep Carlton and Cumberland Houses open.

Sutherland's Saskatchewan River total of 17,825 made beaver⁶ showed an increase over the figure for the previous year, but the amount (1506 made beaver) obtained by Robert Longmoor and Charles Isham proved disappointing, not only because it was a 'very small' trade, but because it came from the Swan River District instead of the Red Deer River area. In 1796, to avoid disagreements arising between the York and

¹ According to Fidler, the men stationed at Edmonton House during winter 1796-97 were: Mr George Sutherland, John Pruden, Robert Annel, John Ballenden [2nd], John Budge [1st], Benjamin Bruce, John Clouston [1st], John Clouston [2nd], James Deering (Deron), John Deering (Deron), Alexander Flett, James Folster, George Goucher, Thomas Goucher, Robert Garroch [junior], Alexander Gun, George Gun, Malcolm Grott, Robert Garson, Hugh Johnson, William Johnson, William Leith (Leigh) [1st], William Leith (Leigh) [2nd], Nicol Leith (Leigh), Thomas Loutitt (Loutitt), James Murry, Magnus Mure (Muer), James Morrowick, John Moore, Oman Norquoy, John Paplay, Henry Spence, William Sinclair [3rd or 4th], Thomas Taylor, William Tate. B.49/a/27^b; also A.30/7 [1796-]1797.

² Pp. 82, 85, 86.

³ P. 92. The York Fort account book for 1796-97 gives the figure 12,512 made beaver. B.239/d/112, fo. 66.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ P. 90.

⁶ According to the figures in the York Factory account book, B.239/d/112, fo. 66.

Albany traders, Colen had ordered Isham to withdraw from the Swan River District and co-operate with the experienced Longmoor in building a post on the Red Deer River ('in the Neighbourhood of Swan River on the South Side of Lake OoWinnipeg') where the Canadians had long had the trade to themselves.¹ But the plan failed from the start because no Indian guide could be found and because Longmoor had insufficient goods even to trade for provisions alone. Instead, Longmoor traded in the Swan River District, not only against Canadians but in competition with John Sutherland at the Indian Elbow Post² who informed him that his (John Sutherland's) superior, James Sutherland, had written from Brandon House on 3 January 1797:

While affairs continued so much emberased in Albany River as it is at present; for want of men from Europe and propper regulations – it will be highly detrimental To the Companys Trade for York Fort to withdraw from this quarter untill such time as we are able to supply their place; you will therefor communicate to Mr George Sutherland and the Gentlemen from York to continue for two or one year more at least untill affairs wears a better aspect in this River then it does at present; when I make no doubt but the Company will be enabled to launch out to advantage in this quarter, tis a strange contrast when the N.W. Company thinks it profitable to send 20 large Canoes up this River when we send only four.³

On the way downstream from Edmonton House in the spring of 1797 Sutherland experienced frustrating delays on account of the late break-up of ice and the journey would have taken even longer but for the '2 fine large Batteaux' of 'thirty feet Keel each' which more than once forced a passage. These had been built in the spring of 1797 at Buckingham House by Nicholas Spence, 'a Clever man building Boats', and taken up to Edmonton, where they arrived on 11 May, to load furs etc.⁴ Well satisfied with their performance Sutherland left them at the head of Trout (Hayes) River while he continued to York Factory. Colen, on learning of their performance, expressed pleasure in his York journal entries for 15 and 17 July, and claimed that he himself had agitated for seven years to make such an experiment but had been unable to do so because

¹ P. 63; B.239/a/99, 17 July 1796.

² B.239/b/66, fo. 13–13d.; B.28/a/3; B.159/a/3. Isham apparently wintered at Swan River House and Longmoor at Carlton House, Assiniboine River. One of Longmoor's competitors was stationed within one hundred yards of Carlton House. B.28/a/3, 27 November 1796.

³ B.159/a/3, fo. 11–11d.

⁴ B.239/b/59, fo. 32d.; B.239/a/100, 15 July 1797; B.239/a/99, 17 July 1796; *infra*, pp. 68, 71, 79, 90, 92; B.24/a/4.

Tomison was 'totally against every mode of carrying on business that lessens the consequence of the Men, Steersmen particularly'. Colen further claimed that the early adoption of his plan (requiring but eighteen men for two bateaux instead of forty men for ten canoes), which he had pressed on the Committee both by correspondence and in person, would not only have doubled the trade in furs, made a saving in men's wages of about £400 annually exclusive of provisions, reduced 'the Arrogance of Steersmen', and lessened the consequence of canoe-builders, but would also have resulted in keeping all but a few Canadians out of the country.¹ The last claim certainly ignored the energy and enterprise of the various groups of Canadian traders. The reluctance of the Committee to accept Colen's recommendations was no doubt to some extent due to his limited knowledge of inland travel and conditions compared with that of Tomison and others. George Sutherland, on the other hand, had seen boats and canoes in use on the Albany River so his claim that boats were a more economic form of transport was not a revolutionary one. Experiments with boats drawing as little water as possible had been made at Albany in the 1740's and, by the time the Frenchman, Germain Maugenest, joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1780, boats formed part of the pattern of inland transport from that depot.² Sutherland also knew that Maugenest's recommendation regarding the building of 'bateaux' 32 feet long and 7 feet broad to replace the cargo-canoes was accepted by the Albany Chief, Thomas Hutchins, to the extent of building, for a start, some of lesser dimensions and drawing not more than 13 inches of water when loaded. Tomison's memory and experience of transport along the Saskatchewan went back twenty years so he understood and knew all about the difficulties and frustrations which had been endured when Indians failed to deliver the canoes they had promised to build. As a result Company men had been forced to learn to build these craft as well as to travel in them. Boat-builders could be engaged in Great Britain, but when the last of the European canoe-builders had gone home or died

¹ B.239/a/100, 15 and 17 July 1797; also 1 October 1796.

² See A. M. Johnson, 'Mons. Maugenest Suggests . . .' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), Summer 1956, for an illustration of the earliest known (1858) diagram of what had become known as a York boat. Since publication of that article the following measurements supplied on 17 July 1803 by John Hodgson, the Albany Chief, to John McNab, Chief at York Fort, have come to notice: '*The largest Inland Boat* Length: of Keel 36 feet, from Stem to Stern Overall 39½ feet, of main thaft 12 Ft. 2 In., of fore thaft 10 Ft. 4 In., of after thaft 10 Ft. 10 In., each of the three frame floor timbers NB. The length of the Thafts & depth to Kelson will tell the lengths of these. Depth under: Main thaft to Kelson 2 Ft., fore thaft to Kelson 2 Ft. 2 In., after thaft to Kelson 2 Ft. 3 In. *A Batteau of 5 men* Length: of Keel 19 Ft. 6 In., of Main thaft 6 Ft. 3½ In., of Fore thaft 5 Ft. 4 In., of After thaft 5 Ft. 9 In. Depth under: Main thaft 1 Ft. 5 In., After thaft 1 Ft. 6 In., Fore thaft 1 Ft. 8 In. Length: from Stem to Stern Overall 26 Ft. 6 In., Rake forward 4 Ft. 1 In., Rake aft 3 Ft. 10 In.'. B.3/b/39, fo. 37.

the Company would once again become dependent on unreliable Indians if numbers of large-size canoes were again needed. Therefore Tomison should not altogether be blamed for wanting to retain a system which worked and which, if discarded, would certainly lead the Committee to cut his already inadequate labour force. Such a cut would place him at an even greater disadvantage in the competition for fur with his better-provided Canadian opponents.¹

Sutherland's two boats made their first journey up the Saskatchewan in the summer of 1797 and he expressed his satisfaction in the Edmonton House journal when they reached that place on 6 October. What Tomison thought of them when he arrived to resume control on 5 November was not recorded in the journal and during the ensuing season he had nothing particular to say about boats beyond mentioning work being done in connection with them. Obviously he had to accept the boats, especially as the inland trip had been so successful, but if the motives attributed to him by Sutherland in his very lengthy letter of abuse (written shortly before finally quitting Rupert's Land) were true they had been accepted only with reservations. Sutherland suspected Tomison of having 'advanced something when last in England about the impracticability of navigating them [boats] up and down the Saskacheawan River' and accused him in no uncertain manner of having tried to sabotage the new transport system by cutting 'five feet from each of the Keels' which had been prepared in advance for building new boats during season 1797-98, thus rendering 'the plan in a great measure abortive'. Sutherland denied that the number of men required to work the boats would be insufficient 'to cope with the Canadians' as it was unnecessary to keep 'a standing army at the upper Settlements' to protect the trade and taunted, 'this is easily proved even at Edmonton House by our being in a state of profound peace last year [1796-97] but at open war since'.²

Whatever Tomison had had to say to the Board whilst in London seems to have been unrecorded, but he clearly satisfied his interrogators. Except for Charles Merry,³ who had become the junior member on the

¹ See remarks about canoes in *H.B.R.S.*, XIV and XV. Two undated entries referring to bateaux in Peter Fidler's MS 'Note Book (1794-1813)' in the Public Archives of Manitoba read: 'Keel 22½, 30 between both Stems, 2 ft. 7 in. deep, 6:6 wide main thaft, 11 Inches sheer. 2 Batteaux built at Brandon Ho. 1810.' (p. 21); 'Demensions of the Batteaux brought from Albany by 5 Men in each Length of Keel 19 ft. 4 in., Main Thaft 6 ft., fore Thaft 5 ft. 4 in., Aft Thaft 5 ft. 6 in., three strokes from the Gunwail clinker built. Cargo 33 bundles of 90 lb. each. Provisions & Goods included' (p. 22). The Society is indebted to Mr Hartwell Bowsfield, Provincial Archivist, for the loan of a photocopy of this 'Note Book'.

² B.239/b/60, fos. 38d.-40, James Sutherland to William Tomison, dated York Factory, 10 August 1798; *infra*, pp. xlviii, 116.

³ Charles Merry, who held £2000 stock, was the second son of Robert and Margaret Merry and was under age at the time of his father's death in 1774. As Captain Merry he went abroad with a

retirement of Joseph Berens, senior, in November 1795, these were the same Committee members on whom Colen had attended when he came to London in 1794. Tomison's stay in Britain covered the eventful period during which the landing at Fishguard of a few men from a French frigate brought a simmering financial crisis to a head by causing a run on the Bank of England,¹ and during which discontent in the Navy erupted into the mutinies at Spithead and The Nore.

Tomison did not, of course, spend all his time in London. He went to South Ronaldsay in January 1797 and found that education had ceased there because the previously prosperous school was occupied by an ordinary tenant. At his own expense he quickly arranged for a John Manson, to teach near where he, Tomison, was born and for the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company to send to Berwick (Burwick, South Ronaldsay), supplies of stationery, bibles, catechisms, books on arithmetic, astronomy, book-keeping, etc.² And, in the following spring, on the day he took passage to resume 'his former Station Inland', he signed the 'Regulations . . . for managing the School Built, & endowed by him near Gossiger, South Ronaldsay'.³

VII

Tomison arrived at York Factory in August 1797 enjoying the full confidence of the Governor and Committee. Visible evidence of this was the sword presented to him as a mark of their esteem and with the pious

relative, 'General Sloper (lately appointed Commander in Chief India)', after having transferred his Hudson's Bay Company stock to the care of his sister, Margaret Merry, and aunt, Mary Merry. He apparently remained absent until about 1790 when the stock was re-assigned to him. The Merry connection with the Hudson's Bay Company had been unbroken since 1706 when Captain John Merry first acquired stock, and the family had provided three Deputy Governors, viz. Captain John Merry (1712-29), John Merry, his elder son (1760-65), and Robert Merry, younger son (1770-74). In his will dated 7 June 1803 and proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 17 August 1805 (London, Somerset House, 1805, Nelson, 606), Charles Merry (formerly of Red Lion Square) was described as of Wimpole Street in the parish of St Marylebone, Middlesex. H.B.C. Archives Dept. files on the Merry family. There is a silhouette of 'Charles Merry Esq. Director 1800. Hudson Bay Company' in the Beaver House picture collection.

¹ See Sir John Clapham, *The Bank of England. A History* (Cambridge, 1944), Vol. I, pp. 271-2. The Privy Council, on 27 February 1797, approved an Order that the Bank of England should suspend issuing cash in payment, and at the meeting of merchants, bankers and others held that day at the Mansion House, Alexander Lean, secretary and representative of the Hudson's Bay Company, was among those who signed an agreement to accept bank notes instead of gold for payments due. A.1/47, fo. 88d.

² A.16/111, fo. 42.

³ B.239/b/59, fo. 45d. The Hudson's Bay Record Society gratefully acknowledges the help of Mr Evan MacGillivray, Orkney County Librarian, who supplied a copy of the 'Minutes of the Presbytery of Kirkwall' for 19 January and 25 November 1797 ' . . . respecting Mr Tomison's School in South Ronaldsay'.

hope that it would never be drawn in anger.¹ The packet included a letter to George Sutherland ordering him to pay proper respect to Tomison's instructions and remarking, 'Mr Tomison is a Gentleman than whom we have not in our Service a more faithful experience[d] & attentive Officer nor one who [merits more highly our regard]'.² Colen, who was brought to task severely on several matters,³ sent letters to the Saskatchewan and Swan River District officers referring them to Tomison for future instructions⁴ and found time to remark in the York Factory journal on 11 September that, according to news from inland, Tomison, now en route to the Saskatchewan, was already showing his 'old strain of Malignity against the Officers' by saying publicly that he had returned just 'to revenge himself on Mr George Sutherland & some others', and that he had sworn not to leave the country until he had had his will of them. 'And in which I believe him', wrote Colen, knowing that his journal, due to be sent to England by the returning ship, would be read by one or more members of the Board.⁵

Sutherland's success in taking boats up the Saskatchewan was in all likelihood the cause of some of Tomison's sourness of temper. In the circumstances it could not have been a happy meeting when Tomison arrived at Edmonton House on 5 November 1797 and Sutherland must have been glad to leave on the 17th for Buckingham House, where he was to be in charge during the winter. It would be interesting to know if he escaped the explosion of wrath which must have followed Tomison's receipt of the letter written to him by Duncan McGillivray at Fort Augustus between 8 and 14 November. Tomison made no reference to this letter or to his opponent in his journal, nor did he enter a copy in the correspondence section of his journal. The only reference to this letter (in which such favourable comments were made about Sutherland) in the Edmonton House records is in the copy of the letter which Tomison addressed to McGillivray on 14 May 1798.⁶ At the end of season 1797-98 a copy of McGillivray's letter was, at Tomison's request, entered in the York Factory 'Country Correspondence', but the 'Several other Letters' which passed between them during the winter of 1797-98 have not survived in any form.⁷ In his letter of November 1797 McGillivray

¹ C.1/402, fo. 2; A.6/16, p. 66. Other recipients were William Bolland (Eastmain), Thomas Thomas, senior (Severn) and Thomas Stayner (Churchill).

² A.6/16, pp. 39-40, 31 May 1797.

³ P. lvii.

⁴ B.239/b/59, fo. 45d., 31 August 1797.

⁵ B.239/a/100.

⁶ P. 134.

⁷ The copy of McGillivray's letter in the correspondence book retained at York Factory, B.239/b/66, fo. 47-47d., includes the marginal remark in Colen's writing, 'This Letter Mr Tomison left wth. me to be entered in York Country Correspondence and the original sent to England in the Co's Packet - several other Letters passed between these Gentlemen during Winter. J.C.' The original letter has not

remarked that as he and Tomison were likely to be neighbours for several years they should come 'to a proper understanding' at the outset. The understanding between the North Westers and Sutherland during season 1796–97 had not only been the means of increasing 'the industry of the Natives' but had led to both sides gaining more respect from them. 'Let us then', McGillivray wrote, 'cast away old prejudices & begin a new Score, we will find it to be ultimately for the good of Both parties, And the Interests of the Country in general'. But in case Tomison should think that the proposal arose out of any feeling of inferiority McGillivray took care to say that he was making the first overture out of consideration for Tomison's age and experience. At this stage of his letter McGillivray was interrupted by a visit from his colleagues, John McDonald and Donald McTavish, and he did not continue it until 14 November after they had gone away. The remaining paragraph reads more as if it were from McDonald's pen for McGillivray continued by saying that Tomison could approve or disapprove as he pleased but he was prepared 'to act with violence and with Vigour', and went on,

I am a young Man in the beginning of my Career, I have all to gain & nothing to lose but my reputation & Life, the Latter is not yet endeared to me by any circumstance that makes it valuable and I will always hold it ready to be sacrificed in support of the former and of the Interest of my employers; I may declare this to be the sentiments of the other Gentlemen in this quarter, I should be Glad to know your opinion of all this but whatever your determination may be you cannot help doing justice to my candour in declaring my Sentiments so openly on both sides of the question. Had Mr Sutherland continued at the head of affairs the present explanation were entirely unnecessary we had full confidence in one another & I believe I may venture to affirm, that neither of us would have abused it. If you pursue his Steps you will have no cause to complain of us as opponents and neighbours.¹

As might be expected there was trouble between Tomison and his neighbours² and consequently the Company's trade suffered. At the end of the season his expenses came to 2013 made beaver and he sent out a total of 10,755 made beaver,³ thus falling short of Sutherland's trade for

survived. The quotations above have been taken from the copy in the York Factory correspondence, B.239/b/60, fos. 21–22, sent to London in 1798.

¹ B.239/b/60, fos. 21d.–22.

² P. 124, n. 1.

³ B.239/d/115, fo. 67. Season 1797–98 was the first for which 'expenses' were entered in the York Factory account books.

1796-97 by some 1745 made beaver. James Gaddy, with eleven men, was left in charge of Edmonton House on 19 May when Tomison started downstream on his long journey to Gordon House.

George Sutherland at Buckingham House, James Bird at Carlton House and Peter Fidler at Cumberland House added 2838 (for expenses amounting to 703), 1253 (expenses 504) and 1230 (expenses 701) made beaver respectively, and so brought the Saskatchewan River trade returns for season 1797-98 to 16,076 made beaver.¹ Fidler's small trade was due to a shortage of trading goods, as will be seen later.²

Swan River House had, of necessity, again been kept up, but Robert Longmoor and his complement of eleven³ obtained most of their trade of 1875 made beaver (costing 747 made beaver) at Carlton House: his Canadian competitor, who had a complement of twelve, obtained only about 500 made beaver. Longmoor complained that season of a shortage of provisions, caused no doubt by the Indians having driven away the buffalo by setting fire to the grass,⁴ and of his Albany colleague, who again wintered at The Elbow, collecting debts due to Swan River District and behaving 'in a worse manner than a Canadian'.⁵

Tomison went no lower downstream than Gordon House in the summer of 1798 and by early July was on his return journey upstream. Because he had apparently decided to go home, George Sutherland refused to remain on the upper Saskatchewan at Tomison's request and accordingly went down to the Bay-side. At York he came across, or more likely was deliberately shown, Tomison's letter to Colen of 6 September (not August) 1797.⁶ This letter, described by Sutherland as 'most ungenerous',

¹ B.239/d/115, fo. 67; B.24/a/5; B.27/a/3; B.49/a/28. In the letter from Colen and council to the Governor and Committee dated York Factory, 21 September 1798, the total figure for 'up the Saskatchewan' is given as 16,275 made beaver. B.239/b/79, fo. 22d.

² P. lxi.

³ B.28/a/4. The men stationed in the District in 1797-98 were: Mr Robert Longmoor (master); Mr Thomas Swain (writer); James Halcrow, Hugh Leask, Andrew Davey, Hugh Houston (steersmen); John Simpson, Charles Hay, George Stainger, George Robinson (bowsmen); Robert Wilson, George Gray, Adam Kirkness, Henry Thompson, Oman Norquoy, Magnus Chambers, Magnus Cooper, John Johnston (Orphir), William Sinclair (middlemen). *Ibid.*, fo. 18.

⁴ B.239/d/115, fo. 67; B.239/b/66, fo. 46; B.28/a/4, 9 October 1797.

⁵ B.28/a/4, 27 January 1798. This journal was sent to London in 1798 and it must have been the remark quoted above which caused the Governor and Committee to write on 31 May 1799 to John McNab and the council at Albany Factory, '10 We observe from the Journals that the People from your Factory lately got so far up Red River as to meet those of York where one Party opposed the other in their Trading. Need we point out to you Measures more repugnant to the Interest of the Company? It has been our invariable orders, and we are almost tired with repeating them, that our several Factories should pursue different directions in their Journeys Inland, & by no means interfere with the Trade of each other. If this Conduct is suffered to continue the Consequences resulting from it will be far more injurious to Us than the utmost Efforts of our Canadian Oponents'. A.6/16, p. 111. The subject was not referred to in a letter of the same date addressed to William Tomison, John Ballanden and council at York Factory. *Ibid.*, fos. 78-81.

⁶ Pp. 126-7.

supplied his motive for writing an abusive one to Tomison on 10 August 1798. And, obviously with Colen's approval, Sutherland made no secret of it, because copies were not only entered in the correspondence book retained at York Factory, but also in the book sent to London for inspection by the Governor and Committee. The jibe:

you went Inland upwards of twenty years ago where you found Cumberland House and the Trade established on Mr Cockings retiring you was appointed Master of that Settlement Very Well! You came down annually with your Trade to the Factory and carried up some trading Goods pray could not any other person in your station have done the same at length the Canadians went farther up the Saskacheawan River to establish Trading Houses, and you crawled after them and in this manner you have followed them from Cumberland to Edmonton House yet I cannot see any thing so extravagantly clever in all this; as any man (a Natural excepted) would, and must, have done the same

and the accusation:

you always made it your study to make the most of the Companys Goods by making many excellent Bargains for them; for instance you have Traded many an old clatch of a Gun from the Indians for a pot of liquor, or a yard of Tobacco and have afterwards had the same Stocked and varnished by the Armourer and then sold them to the Natives at the same price that you did new Guns from England; you have also sold old Kettles from the Kitchen at the same rate as new ones; or when an Indian brought you a Skin for a Hatchet, you have given him a Bayonet, or a Knife in lieu thereof . . .¹

make it clear that Sutherland had no thought of working under Tomison again, though whether he was aware that his brother in Jamaica had died and left him heir to 'some considerable Property' is not known.²

¹ B.239/b/60, fos. 37d.-38, 40d.-41. Sutherland's departing remarks on boats, on Tomison's relations with the North Westers, and on other subjects are referred to or quoted on p. xliii, p. 126, n. 5, p. 127, n. 2.

² A.6/16, p. 89.

VIII

Tomison's other critics, Malchom Ross¹ (who had wintered with Fidler at Cumberland House) and Joseph Colen, also left Rupert's Land by the *King George* in 1798, the first because his contract had expired, the other because he had been recalled. Ross was to return and meet an accidental death on the Churchill River in 1799, but Colen's departure was final and his fur trade career at an end. Ross, like George Sutherland, gave vent to his frustrations by writing to Tomison about that 'most ungenerous' letter of the previous year and, as the Chief was no longer his 'Superior except in Money and Malice', not only aired his grievances about the abortive expeditions to Athabasca, but said,

your greatest wish of extending Trade is Confined within the Banks of the Saskatchewan River as it is evident you have commanded there for Twenty years and has not made any attempt to settle any place out of that River but on the Contrary if any person be who ever he was that went on any other expedition was sure to fall under your displeasure.²

Ross's fur trade career, which began in 1774, had been an active one. He was already familiar with the communication between the Saskatchewan and the Churchill via Cumberland House as well as with the Churchill inland district before setting out in September 1790 as 'Superintendent of the Northward Expedition'³ in the company of Philip Turnor and Peter Fidler, whose object was to reach Athabasca. They got to and returned from the country where the Canadians drew so much wealth by following the North Westers' route via the Saskatchewan River, Cumberland House (at which place supplies allocated to the expedition by Colen were not delivered), Frog Portage, Churchill River and Ile-à-la-Crosse.⁴ On their return in 1792, when misunderstandings between Colen and Turnor were being put to rights, the latter said that it was, from his knowledge, of no use sending supplies for the 'Northern expeditions' to Cumberland House:

¹ For a biography of Malchom Ross, see J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 598-600. Numerous references to him will be found in *H.B.R.S.*, XIV, XV.

² B.239/b/60, fo. 45d. For another quotation from Ross's letter, see p. 127, n. 2.

³ B.239/b/53, fos. 18d.-19. Ross was a volunteer for this expedition. He had charge of 'two Canoe Cargoes of the choicest Trading Goods (and capable men for the undertaking)'. His particular task was to afford every assistance to the expedition and prevent Turnor's time being too much taken up with the Indians. *Ibid.*, fo. 17d.

⁴ B.239/b/52, fo. 17d. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

instead the goods should be sent from York under the charge of the commander of the expedition. Therefore the suggestion then put forward of finding a route 'from York Fort up Nelson's River into the Churchill River' seems to have been made as much for the purpose of avoiding Tomison's influence as in the interest of finding a shorter route. Colen lost no time in following up this idea. Even before Turnor had sailed for England to report in person to the Committee, Colen had outfitted David Thompson for a 'journey of discovery up Nelsons river . . . to the Miss a nippee [Churchill] where five Tracks meet one leads to Cumberland, two Leads to the Athapiscow one to Churchill and one to York'.¹ Colen's instructions of 30 August to Thompson continued,

You are to take that Track from the Miss a nippee to the Athapiscow Lake in which the Deer Lake lies from thence if possible proceed up the River that falls from the Hatchet Lake into the deer a Lake and cross the Hatchet, where there is a River that runs into the Black Lake, and from the Black Lake a River thats fall into the Athapiscow Lake

but he was well aware that in the time allowed Thompson might not be able to get beyond Reindeer Lake.² In fact, Thompson wintered at the west end of Sipiwesk Lake and after the opening of navigation in 1793 got to the Churchill River, but being unable to find Indian guides to take him to Reindeer Lake he returned to York Factory by way of the Burntwood and Nelson Rivers.³

Meanwhile, in May 1793, the Governor and Committee sent instructions for Malchom Ross to organise an expedition to Athabasca by way of the Nelson and Churchill Rivers. Peter Fidler was ordered to accompany him and provided with the necessary instruments for the journey.⁴ But by the time these orders from London were received by Colen and Ross at York on 11 August they were aware of David Thompson's failure to reach Reindeer Lake and their future plans, which at the earliest could only be implemented in 1794, were already based on an expedition starting from Cumberland House. On 29 August 1793 Colen wrote to Tomison informing him that Malchom Ross and James Tate were fitted out 'to erect two Settlements in the Athapiscow', and in a letter of about the same date Colen briefly outlined to Ross the plan to be followed. Ross, on arrival at

¹ Frog Portage on the Churchill River answers this description.

² B.239/b/52, fos. 22, 30; A.6/15, fo. 62.

³ R. Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), pp. lxxiv-v.

⁴ A.6/15, fo. 62; A.5/3, pp. 196-7. But Fidler was employed at York Factory during outfits 1793-5.

Cumberland House in the fall, was to send the men who were to accompany him to Athabasca to 'the most plentiful quarters' along the Saskatchewan to collect supplies (i.e. pemmican) for the proposed journey, and in the spring they were to come back to Cumberland House. From there the party was to go as quickly as possible to Ile-à-la-Crosse where they were to build a post. A few trusted men were to be left there to await the arrival via Cumberland House of Tate and David Thompson. Ross was to go forward to 'the Athapiscow Lake, Piece River or Slave Lake' and choose the most suitable place for a trading post. Then came Colen's warning to Ross,

From the artifices that have been already used to overturn the expeditions to the Athapiscow, I am apprehensive you will be at a loss for a sufficient number of men to accompany you, therefore as encouragement, engage good Steersmen at £20 pr Annum, Bowsmen at £10 or 16 & Middlemen at £10 each will be allowed the additional sum of one fourth added to his yearly Wages during their being employed conducting Canoes into the Athapiscow Country.¹

But, as mentioned earlier,² the expedition did not even get started because, as Ross explained by letter to Colen dated Cumberland House, 5 June 1794, the men who had been engaged for the journey in the previous fall were not able to get assurances from Tomison about the promise of increased wages. So, instead of going to Athabasca immediately, Ross proposed moving 'into the Burntwood Lake or some where their about', although he could not speak 'for the utility of it', and spend the summer among the Indians known to the North Wester, Robert Thomson. Meanwhile, David Thompson would go down to the Factory to report in person. Thompson wrote to Colen on the following day saying that he and Ross intended going to 'that Country where I was last summer' and from there continue to Athabasca, but while Ross was among the North Wester's Indians he, Thompson, would travel 'by the Northway' to York Factory to collect the men and canoes for the Northern expedition. Thompson thought the new plans were 'of more utility tho' not so glaring as the one we have been obliged to abandon with the utmost unwillingness', and ended his letter,

I wish you to be on your guard concerning the men as Mr Tomison will be for detaining all those he can, he has all this winter behaved very well, he has not spoke or acted against the Northward but

¹ B.239/a/35; B.239/b/54, fos. 35, 36-36d.

² P. xviii.

neither has he done any thing to assist us; he just keeps within the Law, a hint to you is sufficient.¹

Colen's disappointment at the change of plans was great, but he approved of Ross moving to the place he had chosen, Reed Lake, where he was distant enough from Cumberland House to keep his men beyond the reach of Tomison's influence. And when David Thompson returned inland after his visit to York he carried instructions from Colen dated 20 July 1794 ordering him (after assisting James Tate to carry out plans concerned with the posts supplied by way of Nelson River) to join Ross at Reed Lake. From that place, at the first opportunity, Thompson was 'to gain information of the Track into the Athapascow Country'.² While Colen was in England during the winter of 1794-95 explaining the state of the Company's affairs at York Factory and inland to the Governor and Committee, Ross and Thompson wintered at Reed Lake and by doing so caused Thomas Stayner, the Chief at Churchill, to complain to Colen on 13 August 1795,

there appears to me to have been a plan of circumvention determined on last Year at York, Mr Ross settled a House last year in the Reed Lake within less than three days walk of where Mr [George] Charles wintered in 1793 & 4³ & undoubtedly intended to sweep of all the Sd. Indians empld. in Buildg. & Navigating our Canoes

and add prophetically, 'nor would it surprise me to hear of Messrs Ross & Thompson wintering at the Deers River where I have already sent people'.⁴ Stayner's forecast was not far out because in season 1795-96 Ross wintered at Fairford House below the mouth of Reindeer River, Thompson at Duck Portage at the west end of Sisipuk Lake, and Stayner's men (George Charles and William Linklater) respectively at Granville House on Granville Lake and Carlton House (Three Points) on Pukatawagan Lake.⁵ By the men going inland to meet Ross and Thompson with trade goods for the next outfit, Colen sent a letter dated 15 June 1796 saying that but for a visit from Stayner he would have been ignorant of their movements. If they were indeed stationed so near the Churchill men his, Colen's, plans

¹ Pp. xviii, xix; B.239/b/55, fos. 15d.-17.

² B.239/b/55, fos. 22d., 23, 24-5d., 37d.

³ Wepiskow, i.e. Burntwood Lake, Manitoba. B.229/a/1, 11 and 15 August 1793; B.42/b/4, fos. 47, 51d.

⁴ B.239/b/56, fo. 25-25d. For a summary of the movements of Ross and Thompson during season 1794-95, see Glover, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii. Their trade amounted to 1381 made beaver. B.239/b/79, fo. 8.

⁵ See Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxvii-viii. Ross and Thompson's trade returns for 1795-96 amounted to 2005 made beaver. B.239/d/108, fo. 64. George Charles's 1795-96 journal for the second season he spent at Granville House is B.83/a/2. William Linklater's Carlton House (Three Points) journal is B. 29/a/1.

were upset as his purpose was not to hinder, but to help, Stayner oppose the Canadian traders. Colen then remarked,

Mr Stayner further informed me of his people having navigated Craft of large Burthen from Churchill to the spot where Mr [George] Charles wintered in a few Days if so it is evident Goods can be conveyed with more ease and less Expence to the Company from Churchill than it can be done from York in Canoes I repeat what I have heard & wish to receive Information from you on this Head that I may regulate pursuits in future.¹

When Ross was at York in the following month Colen pursued the subject in a letter dated 9 July addressed jointly to Ross and Thompson. Colen instructed them to give way to the Churchill men if they reached Fairford House first or if they heard news that the Churchill men were able 'to push forward into the Athapescow Country' in 1796. In these circumstances Ross and Thompson were to surrender their trading goods and provisions to Stayner's men and take what was unwanted to Cumberland House. The York servants, if so inclined, could be transferred to the Churchill establishment. But if Ross and Thompson neither saw nor heard of the Churchill traders they were 'to proceed with all Speed' to their 'Winter's Station' and return in 1797 by way of Cumberland House. There, if the Athabasca project had not been surrendered to Stayner, they could expect to find goods and provisions to enable them to return to the north without the necessity of going down to York.² This arrangement based on Cumberland House assumed, of course, that Tomison could no longer postpone returning to Europe. To Ross and Thompson future prospects were scarcely encouraging.

When Ross left York to return inland he carried another letter dated 9 July addressed to David Thompson alone. In it Colen commented that Stayner's men instead of trading to the northward of Churchill had established inland posts to the southwards of York Factory, and by doing so had opposed their colleagues instead of Canadians. To avoid future dissension Colen had 'withdrawn from all Stations to the Northward, except that of pushing forward to the Athapescow', but he was ready to relinquish that objective if Stayner was capable of getting a footing there. Colen concluded by remarking that when Ross left 'the Northward Track' in 1797 to go home, he, Thompson, was 'to take the Command' until further notice.³ On receiving this letter Thompson must have wondered what would be left for him to command should the Churchill

¹ B.239/a/99, 16 June 1796; B.239/b/57, fos. 17d.-18. *Infra*, p. lxviii.

² B.239/b/57, fos. 22-3.

³ *Ibid.*, fo. 24-24d.

traders take over the Athabasca expedition, and his reflections on the subject during the following winter no doubt had some bearing on his future conduct. Meanwhile Ross, who was ill and depressed when he left York on 13 July 1796 to return northwards, wrote disconsolately from Split Lake to Colen on the 29th about the disadvantages he had laboured under during the preceding years by having to change quarters every winter in poor, barren country so as to draw Indians away from Canadians, and he would have felt even worse if he had known what was yet in front of him.¹ He arrived at his Fairford House of the previous winter on 26 August and there found David Thompson who had spent the summer surveying 'the road from fairford House to the East end of Athepiskaw Lake throw Deers Lake &c.'² Three days later, after abandoning Fairford House, they started on the next stage of their journey towards Athabasca. But Thompson's insistence, to which Ross gave way, that the route via Deer, Hatchet and Black Lakes which he had recently surveyed would be practicable with large canoes even though one small creek had then been shallow, brought them to a point when they could not find water enough 'for an Indian Canoe light to float on'.³ It was too late in the season to return to Fairford House and follow the Ile-à-la-Crosse route to Athabasca Lake, so the party went to the west shore of Reindeer Lake where Ross knew of a suitable site for a post. Here they built log huts which they named Bedford House and where they spent a winter on short allowance.⁴ On 21 May 1797 Thompson informed Ross that as his contract with the Hudson's Bay Company had expired he was joining the North West Company, and on the following day left Bedford House. But Thompson was, in fact, deserting because he had not given the year's notice of his intention as required in all contracts made by the Company with its employees.⁵ When Ross was able to leave on 5 July with fur returns

¹ B.239/b/57, fo. 37-37d.

² B.239/b/66, fo. 19d., Ross to G. Sutherland, dated Bedford House, 20 May 1797. For Thompson's account of this journey, see Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-20.

³ B.239/b/59, fo. 40. See Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiii-iv.

⁴ B.14/a/1. Ross and Thompson had been followed in the autumn of 1796 by Alexander Fraser of the North West Company, but because of the lack of a pilot he did not catch up with them until 6 April 1797. Fraser was 'much esteemed & well Experienced' among the Indians of the area. B.239/b/59, fos. 39-40d. For Thompson's account, 'Winter at Reindeer Lake', see Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 121 *et seq.* See also *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵ When Colen heard about Thompson on 2 August 1797 he remarked in his York Factory journal, 'He [Thompson] has I hear been in treaty with them for the last two years. I am rather inclined to think that this young Man, has been encouraged by others on this Establishment to pursue the steps he has taken, and my reason for these surmises are from the conversation of Mr Wright Surgeon during Winter'; and on the next day, 'His agreement with the *Canadians* was known to Mr Wright and several of the Officers two years ago, and the Death of one of the *Proprietors* (Mr Robt. Thompson) during my absence in England, with whom the agreement was made stopped David Thompson from leaving this Service the last year'. B.239/a/100.

amounting to 1503 made beaver, he gave up all thoughts of going home and arranged for the trading goods on hand to be moved to the Île-à-la-Crosse track where John Park and John Allen were to await his return from York Factory.¹

Ross arrived at York on 2 August and Colen called a council meeting for the next day. Very briefly, the outcome of the discussions was that as Ross could not return to the North (as he at first offered) because of an acute shortage of gunpowder, it was unanimously agreed 'to Relinquish all pursuits to the Athapascow and leave that trade solely to be carried on by the Company's Servants from Churchill'. But Ross was to keep his rendezvous with John Park and John Allen and bring the Company's property to Cumberland House where it was to be used to supplement Peter Fidler's outfit for the coming winter.² When reporting this meeting in his York Factory journal³ Colen took the opportunity of justifying his own past conduct as regards the Athabasca undertaking. He made no mention of Tomison: instead he expressed doubts about Ross and David Thompson. Ross, because he was the only one who knew the route to the appointed rendezvous, could not go to London to vindicate himself, so he must have returned inland feeling even further depressed knowing that Colen (whom he had once described as 'the ornament of this North part of the Bay, by his unwearied attention to both public & private affairs')⁴ had alleged that there was every appearance of himself and Thompson having been 'inimical to their Employers Interest' and of having taken underhand steps 'to set aside' the Athabasca project.

Ross kept his promised rendezvous and on 4 October arrived at Cumberland House (where he was to winter) bearing news that instead of being able to meet Fidler's needs with the surplus Athabasca goods he was empty-handed, everything having been transferred to George Charles from Churchill Factory.⁵ Before Ross had been able to reach his destination Charles had come upon Park and Allen 'at the Athakasakepitchegun Portage' on 13 September and on the next day, acting under instructions from Stayner, had taken charge of the goods.⁶ The transfer had indeed

¹ B.14/a/1, *passim*; B.239/d/113, fo. 66. ² B.239/a/100, 3 August 1797; B.49/a/28, 4 October 1797.

³ B.239/a/100.

⁴ B.9/a/1, 16 July 1792.

⁵ B.49/a/28.

⁶ B.106/a/1, Lac la Ronge journal; B.42/b/39, fo. 4d. In their letter of September 1798 to the Governor and Committee, Thomas Stayner and council at Churchill Factory stated that the 1797-98 expedition 'towards Atha pis cow' failed because no pilot could be found. They continued, 'also add the absolute necessity in a first expedition of clearing Carrying Places & laying Rollers for dragging the boats upon which with the unskillfulness of several of the Men obliged Mr Charles to Winter at a very large Lake called by the Canadians Lac la Ronge where they had 2 Men to watch Mr Charles's motions they had previously directed the Natives in the neighbourhood to leave that Country afraid no doubt that amongst them a Pilot might be found to carry our people in the ensuing Summer either to the Atha pis cow Lake or up the Beaver River & so effectual was the emigration that not one Native nor the track of one was seen for several days walk on either side during the whole Winter,

been included in the provisional arrangement made between the York and Churchill chiefs in 1796,¹ but neither Stayner nor Charles had had time to learn about the York council's decision to send the remaining ice chisels, files and hatchets from the Athabasca outfit to meet deficiencies at Cumberland House. In consequence Fidler's trade, as already mentioned, suffered during 1797-98.²

IX

Colen's recall in 1798 could not have been a complete surprise either to himself or Tomison. The older man, on his return to York Factory from England in 1797, moved quickly inland to the Saskatchewan area and after expressing his thoughts on several matters in no uncertain manner to Colen in the 'ungenerous' letter of 6 September 1797,³ had no more communication with him until the following year. Tomison's return was not the only warning sign. In the spring of 1797 the Governor and Committee had been in a complaining mood. George Sutherland was ordered to pay proper respect to Tomison,⁴ and David Thompson was not only reprimanded⁵ because he had omitted to send them his 'Remarks & Observations to the Charts' sent Home for the Two last Years', but ordered not to fail in his duty by the next return of the ship. The Committee were unaware that by this time, 31 May 1797, Thompson had become a North Wester. Fidler came in for similar criticism in the Committee's letter of the same date to Colen and the York Factory council.⁷

It was Colen against whom the Governor and Committee's anger was

in consequence we had but a very few furs from that quarter Mr Linklaters House [Granville House, Granville Lake] we are happy to inform you was productive, while at the same time the Canadians did not carry out more than 3 small bundles'. B.42/b/44, fo. 66.

¹ P. liii.

² B.239/a/100, 3 August 1797; B.49/a/28, 4 and 9 October 1797.

³ Pp. 126-7.

⁴ P. xlv.

⁵ A.6/16, p. 41.

⁶ The contemporary catalogue (A.64/45, p. 130) includes under the contents of Chest No. 1, 'A Map of the South track from York Fort to Cumberland House. D Thompson' with the marginal remark in red ink, 'Missing 1819'. Included under the contents of Chest No. 3 (p. 135) is 'A Map of the Rivers & Lakes above York Fort with the communication of Port Nelson River with Churchill River including part of Churchill River by David Thompson 1794 & 1795'. When the next catalogue, classified A.64/52, was started (which could have been as early as 1815 according to the watermark of pp. 1-215) Thompson's map which was missing in 1819 was not included. But the four items comprising the contents of Chest No. 3 were listed on p. 182 as now being in an 'Upright Case'. These four items are not included in the next catalogue, A.64/56, which was completed in January 1923.

⁷ A. 6/16, pp. 59-60. The contemporary catalogue, A.64/45, p. 135, includes under the contents of Chest No. 3, 'A Map of his Journey [1792-93] to the Stoney Mountains & with the River Saskashawan by Peter Fidler 1794 & 1795'. It cannot be established when this map was received in London. See p. 317, n. 4. The journal of the journey is in E.3/2, pp. 1-69. As in the case of Thompson's 'Map of the Rivers & Lakes . . .', Fidler's map was listed in A.64/52, but had disappeared by the time A.64/56 was compiled.

mainly directed in 1797. A number of their sharp criticisms concerned his management at York Factory. One was their difficulty in obtaining proper information about the stock of untradeable goods there which Colen himself had estimated in 1794 as amounting in value to nearly £10,000. In 1796 Edward Jarvis had been brought out of retirement by the Committee and sent to York to examine these goods with the object of discovering how much of the stock, and of similar stocks at other factories, could lawfully be returned to England for disposal to the best advantage. Jarvis, bearing the title of 'Supervisor & Inspector of the Company's Factories & Settlements in Hudson's Bay', and with the right to preside in council wherever he went, was also instructed to report on present and future prospects of trade,¹ but for reasons which are beyond the limits of this introduction he did not even begin his examination and returned to England in the following year. Among a number of peremptory instructions given to Colen in the letter of 1797 was one ordering him to return the 'large bound Manuscript Book by Mr Andw. Graham containing remarks during his residence at the Bay' which the Committee had only recently discovered that he, Colen, had taken to York Factory in 1795.²

About the only subjects on which Colen was not reprimanded in 1797 were his advice to Stayner not to interfere in the dispute between the Indians and Canadians arising out of the murder of Robert Thomson in the Muskrat country, and the abandonment of the York inland posts which interfered with the trade of Churchill.³ Tomison's men on the upper Assiniboine were at this time competing against the Albany traders, but the position there was not so explosive as that which existed between Colen and Stayner in regard to Athabasca or to their competition in the Muskrat country. Stayner was understandably aggressive for he had been warned that unless he could show improved trading results he would lose his independent command.⁴

It is not possible to record exactly the movements of the York inland traders up the Nelson River, but Colen's subordinates appear to have wintered at Chatham House on Wintering Lake and also on Sipiwesk Lake in 1793-94. When these two posts were closed at the end of the

¹ A.6/16, pp. 34, 55-6; A.1/47, fo. 75d. For a biography of Edward Jarvis, see *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XVII, E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, editors, *Moose Fort Journals 1783-85* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1954), pp. 350-3.

² A.6/16, p. 60. It is not possible to identify the particular volume which Colen returned by the ship of 1797 (B.239/b/79, fo. 20) as there are several books of 'Observations' by Andrew Graham answering to the Committee's description, and John Brome's catalogue (p. xix, n. 3) throws no light on the matter. The book in question may perhaps have been the one classified as E.2/12, which is being prepared for publication by the Hudson's Bay Record Society in 1969.

³ A.6/16, pp. 59, 60. Robert Thomson, who had been in charge of this area for the North West Company for about seven years, was shot by Indians in the spring of 1795. B.178/a/1, 12 June 1795.

⁴ Pp. xxiv-v.

outfit they were replaced by Apsley House on Cross Lake and York House (or 'Nestowwians or three points') on Threepoint Lake, Burntwood River. At Apsley House during outfit 1794-95 James Tate traded 1163 made beaver and at York House William Sinclair traded 2924 made beaver.¹ Stayner complained to Colen on 13 August 1795 that Sinclair's purpose in settling at 'three points' was to be in a position where he could prevent the Northward Indians from visiting Churchill Factory, but Stayner was satisfied that his own inland trader, George Charles, had frustrated the plan by building at the 'Musquawegon River'.²

Colen's next move, in an effort to follow instructions from London to keep out of the path of the Churchill traders, was to order Sinclair to close York House and build elsewhere. Accordingly, in 1795-96, Sinclair operated from Wegg's House on Setting Lake, where he obtained 1731 made beaver, and Tate, continuing to occupy Apsley House, gained trade returns amounting to 956 made beaver.³ Meanwhile, on 4 January 1796, Colen wrote to Stayner,

how it's possible for Churchill to supply that place [Nestowwians] with Goods to a greater Advantage to the Company than this Settlement can, is to me a Mystery, as it lies nearly two Degrees to the Southward of this place [York] by Mr Thompson's Chart.⁴ After the Ship's Departure [1795] a Musqua Rat River Native who hunted for Mr Sinclair last Winter came from that place thro' the Middle Track which enters at the Head of Steel River & came down this He tells me it is two Days nearer than Nelson River Track.⁵

But the inescapable fact remains that traders using the Nelson-Burntwood and Churchill River routes could hardly avoid competing against each other when settled on their wintering grounds.⁶

On Colen's orders the post on Cross Lake was closed in the summer of 1796 and replaced a little later that year by Colen's Cot on Jack River, near the north-east corner of Lake Winnipeg. Wegg's House was also

¹ B.239/b/55, fo. 24; B.239/a/96, fos. 48, 52; B.14/a/1, fo. 3d.; B.239/b/66, fo. 24d.; B.239/b/58, fos. 32d.-33d., 94; B.239/a/99, fos. 2d.-3, 15d.; B.239/b/79, fo. 8. Split Lake House, established by W. H. Cook in 1790, was also closed in 1794. B.42/z/1, fo. 48d.

² B.239/b/56, fo. 25-25d. Charles's post (1794-95) was Granville House on Granville Lake, Manitoba.

³ B.239/d/108, fo. 64; B.228/a/1; B.66/a/1; B.55/a/1.

⁴ P. lvi, n. 6.

⁵ B.239/b/58, fos. 87-8.

⁶ Churchill River almost as far west as Frog Portage is only indicated, and the area west of the Factory and south as far as Nelson River is blank on Aaron Arrowsmith's map of North America dated 1 January 1795. His next map, bearing additions to 1802, clearly marks the whole course of the Churchill, shows the Burntwood River communication with the Nelson, and marks but does not name Reindeer River and Lake.

abandoned and Sinclair, as instructed, not only built a post (named Fort Lake) at or near 'the Neyowagow' at the east end of 'the Ta task qua hah Sackahagan or Split Lake', but wintered at a second new post, Fort Hulse, situated 'at the long narrow Lake [probably Apussigamasi] up the Burnt Wood River'. To prevent his Indian customers from trading at Canadian posts Sinclair met their wishes for a post on Wepiskow (Burntwood) Lake, where George Charles from Churchill had wintered in 1793–94, but John Harper, senior, and the three men sent there found that they were within two days walking distance of the Churchill inland post of Carlton House on Pukatawagan Lake. As Indians indebted to William Linklater at that post visited both Harper and Sinclair, Colen's good intentions of not interfering with the Churchill Indians were once again frustrated. In 1797 Sinclair brought out a total of 3482 made beaver and of that amount 1284 had been traded at Burntwood Lake.¹ In season 1797–98 Colen gave the management of 'the North River Settlements' to William Hemmings Cook with orders to withdraw from all stations near the Churchill traders, not to encourage visits from their Indians, and not to make settlements beyond Split Lake.² Cook apparently wintered at Fort Lake and his trade (3126 made beaver plus 1387 from William Sinclair, who settled somewhere on or near Nelson River) was obtained for joint expenses amounting to 261 made beaver.³

Unlike Tomison or others, Colen used his York Factory journal not only for recording events at the depot, but also as a means of communicating to the Governor and Committee his personal views on the trade there as well as inland, and also thoughts about his colleagues. As marginal marks or notes indicate that his journals were read in London it cannot be said that he was quite unrepresented during 1796–97 when Tomison was in person justifying his own conduct, or in the following outfit when, as Colen described them, the 'very much debilitated' and always unsatisfied Jarvis, and the untruthful and 'Dog and Manger' Stayner who boasted of his influence in Fenchurch Street,⁴ returned to make their explanations to the Committee. When the time for Colen's recall came it was made in no uncertain terms; he was warned that if he disobeyed and remained at York his salary would cease as from the day the *King George* began the return voyage.⁵ But Colen embarked on 23

¹ P. 64, and p. 96, n. 2; B.229/a/1; B.239/a/99, 20 July 1796; B.239/b/58, fos. 104, 112d.; B.88/a/1, *passim*; B.239/a/100, 17 August 1797; B.29/a/2, 8–14 December 1796; B.239/d/112, fo. 66. John Harper had 'accompanied Mr D. Thompson in his first discoveries up Nelson into the Churchill waters'. B.239/a/100, fo. 34.

² B.239/b/66, fo. 26; B.239/a/100, 9 September 1797.

³ B.239/a/101, fo. 23; B.239/d/115, fo. 67.

⁴ B.239/a/100, 6 December 1796, 7 and 8 September 1797.

⁵ A.6/16, pp. 81, 89, 90.

September 1798 and in the following February, at an interview with the Board (which had remained unchanged since November 1795), was informed that there was no further occasion for his services.¹ By this time the only domestic problem he had left at York Factory had solved itself. In spite of every 'civility' shown by his successor, John Ballanden, 'Mr Colens Girl and Children' went away on 2 December 1798 with 'a Male Companion who had long since been in the habit of her attention & affection'.²

X

When Colen and the York Factory council had informed the Governor and Committee in 1797 that the 'Northern Stations' had been closed and, their trade left for the Churchill traders, they had, at the same time, expressed the view that the Athabasca country was extensive enough for occupation by men from both factories: the aim of all was to prevent the Canadians from continuing to monopolise the very profitable trade in superior-quality furs from that area.³ In their reply of 31 May 1798 (to Tomison and council, Colen having been recalled) the Committee limited their remarks on Athabasca to expressing satisfaction with the conduct of Malchom Ross at Bedford House and hoping that both York and Churchill men would settle posts in that great extent of country.⁴ But by the time this letter was written the Athabasca expedition had been taken over by Churchill men and the York personnel formerly employed on it had been added to Tomison's complement on the Saskatchewan.⁵ And when the letter was received at York Factory, even if Tomison had not been on his way inland, it was too late in the year for him or for Colen's successor at York to launch an expedition that year.

¹ A.1/47, fo. 26. Colen, who at least as late as 1811 maintained contact with his former colleagues in Hudson Bay, is variously described in the Company's books as of the London parishes of St Dunstan's-in-the-West and St Botolph, Coleman Street, and of West Ham, Essex, but his family belonged to Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Engraved copies (dated 1796) of a portrait of Colen (wearing his Hudson's Bay Company uniform coat) are in the Company's archives and in the Public Archives of Canada. Colen's name unexpectedly appears in connection with Lord Selkirk's Red River Settlement. In 1802, a former North Wester, Patrick Small, having turned down the offer 'of a noble Peer' to share in the management of 'establishing a Colony from Scotland . . . thro' the Bay', introduced 'the Peer to Colen, formerly in the H.B. employ', who entertained 'a favorable opinion of the scheme'. This scheme, 'kept a profound secret', was thought by John Fraser to be 'too absurd almost to be mention'd'. F.3/2, fos. 63d.-64, J. Fraser to Simon McTavish, dated London, 6 August 1802.

² B.239/a/101. Colen's young nephew, Thomas Colen, remained on the York inland establishment.

³ B.239/b/79, fo. 20.

⁴ A.6/16, pp. 83-4. On the same date the council at Churchill Factory was informed that the Committee thought there was room enough in Athabasca for both York and Churchill men. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁵ B.239/b/79, fo. 25.

John Ballanden was promoted Chief at York Factory after a two years' absence from Rupert's Land. His new contract was for five years at a salary of £130 per annum, plus £10 for a servant, and plus a premium of 3s. 6d. per score on all made beaver traded at York Factory and 6d. a score on all made beaver traded inland and repacked at York Factory.¹ If his enquiries regarding the manner in which Tomison preferred the inland trading goods to be packed can be accepted as evidence, his intention was to try to work in harmony with his senior colleague. But Ballanden was unable to satisfy Tomison in the fall of 1798 due to the late arrival of the supply-ship at York Factory.² There was a special consignment of goods aboard addressed to Tomison in conformity with an arrangement made by the Governor and Committee on his return to Rupert's Land in 1797. Then the York Factory council had been instructed quite firmly to avoid any further disputes about the distribution of goods among the districts inland by reserving for, and sending to, Tomison all goods addressed to him. Furthermore, Tomison would 'appoint a fit person and send him to the Factory to take charge of such Goods and attend the Conveyance of them to Him from time to time'.³ These orders must have left Colen and his successor in no doubt about the Board's view of the importance of the Saskatchewan River trade. Ballanden's inability to follow these instructions consequently resulted in a scarcity of trading goods at the posts along the lower Saskatchewan during season 1798-99.

After finishing his business at Gordon House in June 1798 Tomison lost no time in returning up the Saskatchewan. He reached and left Cumberland House almost a week before the first North West Company arrivals from Grand Portage⁴ and, after a laborious journey, arrived at Edmonton House on 11 September to find the summer occupants well but short of provisions. This uncomfortable state of shortage lasted even while Indians were still visiting the post, and it became worse after they moved to their winter hunting grounds. But for 'the garden stuff' (potatoes, presumably) the situation would have been even more miserable until an improvement began in the New Year. The shortage may have been due in part to the Indians continuing their policy of withholding supplies because they had been stopped from trading provisions early in 1797,⁵ but it may equally have been caused by the distance in getting the meat to the post, for in December there were no buffalo to be seen within seventy miles of Edmonton House.⁶

The 'opposition parties' in nineteen large canoes arrived on 23

¹ A.6/16, pp. 33, 35; A.1/47, fo. 111d. See *infra*, p. 172, n. 2 for biographical details.

² P. 181, n. 1.

³ A.6/16, p. 58.

⁴ B.49/a/29.

⁵ Pp. 85, 133.

⁶ Pp. 151, 153.

September, but beyond later remarking that his new neighbours had 'done no good' but might 'do much harm',¹ Tomison omitted any enlightening references to either the New North West Company people,² or his 'Old Company' neighbours at Fort Augustus.

A 'disorder in the head and breast' struck many of the Edmonton House inmates during the last days of March 1799 and this was no doubt the same illness which also affected the men at Buckingham House and, continuing during April into May, left the sufferers so 'worn down with sickness' that they were unfit for the heavy work of getting the loaded boats down to Oxford House at the end of the season.³ Tomison escaped this sickness but on 15 April, when involved in an argument with an Indian demanding liquor, received a knife stab inside his left knee.⁴ The continuing discomfort from the wound was eventually to be one of his reasons for returning to England in the autumn, but meanwhile he had some particular arrangements for season 1799-1800 to make before going down to York Factory.

In spite of his former opposition to boats Tomison not only had repairs made to those in use, but had more built during season 1798-99. As boats required fewer hands than canoes some labour was released for the expedition he was planning to send to Red Deer Lake (Lac la Biche) and Beaver River. Four large canoes and a small one for two Indian guides were especially built for this venture. At last Tomison was taking active measures to advance towards Athabasca. A short reconnaissance made in April by one of Hallett's men from Buckingham House towards Moose Lake (ground well known to the North Westers) to find out if goods could be transported northwards by land was also part of the preliminary work.⁵ But, as will be seen, Tomison's plans were to conflict with those being made both by Stayner at Churchill and the Committee in London.

By 16 May six boats and five canoes loaded with fur returns were on their way downstream and Edmonton House left with a summer complement of ten, James Gaddy being in charge. Henry Hallett, who joined the out-going brigade at Buckingham House on 20 May, had had plenty of food there during the preceding winter and at one time could report 'Buffalo very Numerous near the Houses', but his men, like those at Edmonton, suffered from violent colds and coughs during the spring and one, James Sutherland 2nd, died. Hallett did not mention in his journal or correspondence a New North West Company opponent, or name his Old North West neighbour at Fort George, but on 31 March he

¹ P. 187, n.

² P. 182, n. 2.

³ Pp. 167, 168.

⁴ P. 163. No mention is made of what happened to the Indian.

⁵ P. 66, n. 3.

sent two men up to Tomison at Edmonton with the warning that 'our Neighbour', meaning his Old North West competitor, was intending 'to avacate their Present abode this ensuing Spring'. On 16 May this move to Turtlelake River was carried out when, as Hallett reported, 'the Canadians left their Opposition' to build lower down the Saskatchewan River, but Fort George, now in a ruinous condition, was not abandoned for it is known that David Thompson wintered there 1799-1800. When Hallett joined the outgoing brigade on 20 May John Peter Pruden was left in charge of Buckingham House for the summer with Alexander Flet and six other men to carry out the daily duties.¹

Tomison passed James Bird's Setting River post without comment and on 25 May stopped overnight at Carlton House where Bird was awaiting his arrival.² Season 1798-99 had been a disturbed one for Bird on account of the new opposition which had arrived in the area late in August 1798. The New North West Company not only established a post about half a mile above Carlton House, but also another some two miles higher than the mouth of the Sturgeon (Setting) River where Magnus Twatt built for the Hudson's Bay Company and the North Westers settled themselves.³ Leaving James Sandison in charge at Carlton House, Bird went to Setting River to spend the winter. He reached there on 28 October before Twatt had even roofed the house, but spent a disappointing winter, though he appears to have lived in friendliness with his North West Company neighbour. He returned to Carlton House in the following May and, without mentioning the arrangements made for the summer, recorded that he joined Tomison's brigade on the 26th en route for Cumberland House.⁴

Fidler, who had spent the summer of 1798 at Cumberland House, had requested that if 'no new discoveries' were to be set afoot during season 1798-99 he should continue in charge of Cumberland House. This had been allowed and, after watching the North Westers and 'Little Company' men pass en route to their wintering grounds, and no doubt envying David Thompson his chance to go to Beaver River, he had settled down to spend a winter that passed without special incident. His own opponent had been the half-breed, John Richards, who had deserted from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1797.⁵ Tomison and Bird reached Cumberland House with their trade returns for 1798-99 on 28 May and during the

¹ P. 168, p. 195, n. 4, and B.24/a/6, 16 December 1799, 2 and 8 April 1800; Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), Vol. II, p. 561n.

² B.197/a/1.

³ B.197/a/1, 2 October 1798.

⁴ Pp. 182, 186, 202 and B.197/a/1. James Sandison was apparently in charge during summer 1799.

⁵ B.239/b/66, fo. 46d.; B.49/a/29.

following days must have thoroughly discussed with Fidler the plans for the 'intended expedition in some other quarter'.¹ Fidler was to take the leading part in it. It was during this time that William Linklater from the Churchill inland post of Loon Lake arrived, but though Tomison remarked that the journey was undertaken 'by order of Mr Stainer to know the conveyance by water' between the Churchill and the Saskatchewan, as well as 'to get two old hands',² no such explanation can be found in the Churchill records. How much Linklater told Tomison about George Charles's unsuccessful effort to reach the Beaver River in the previous summer (because an Indian guide could not be found) and about the renewed efforts to be made almost immediately, is not known.³ And even if Tomison, acting out of character, had divulged his plans for Beaver River, there was no time to warn Stayner at Churchill.

Leaving Fidler at Cumberland House to continue his preparations for the forthcoming expedition, Tomison and Bird continued downstream with the trade returns. These amounted to 17,697 made beaver. Of this total by far the largest amount, 10,889, came from Edmonton House: of the remainder 2997 came from Buckingham House, 1653 from Setting River and Carlton House, and 2158 from Cumberland House. Only 729 made beaver were brought from the Swan River District⁴ by Robert Longmoor. Very little can now be traced about his movements during 1798-99. Colen's plan that Longmoor should go on to the Red Deer River area was thwarted from the start because Tomison took most of the goods allocated to that quarter up the Saskatchewan.⁵ As a result, Longmoor's operations were limited to maintaining Swan River House and to wintering on the Assiniboine in opposition to his Company competitor from Albany Factory, Thomas Harvey, at the Indian Elbow.⁶ According to Fidler, Longmoor built a new post on the Swan River about sixteen miles or so above Somerset House,⁷ but no confirmation of this can be found.

While James Bird was returning inland from Gordon House to set in motion the plans made for the Saskatchewan District during 1799-1800, Tomison was occupied at Oxford and Gordon Houses. He eventually arrived at York on 29 July and there, according to Ballanden, remained because he wanted fresh supplies of small shot to take back inland. Not even enough for the autumn goose hunt remained on hand at the depot,

¹ P. 166.

² P. 169. Stayner had returned from England to resume his command at Churchill in 1798. B.42/a/124, 1 September 1798.

³ B.42/b/41, *passim*.

⁴ B.239/d/117, fo. 59d.

⁵ P. 170, n. 3.

⁶ B.28/a/5, 29 September and 3 October 1799; B.22/a/6, 1 December 1798, 25 January 1799; B.56/a/1, 17 June 1799.

⁷ E.3/2, p. 87. The remark occurs in Fidler's revised journal of the journey undertaken in 1795 from Swan River House to the Assiniboine River where Carlton House was to be built.

so Tomison was obliged to wait for the arrival of the *King George* from England.¹ To the concern of everyone, the ship was delayed, but at last anchored off York on 30 August. Again, according to Ballanden, when Tomison found that he could not have as many men as he wanted to take up the Saskatchewan River, he settled 'positively for England',² but the Governor and Committee's letter of 31 May 1799 addressed to Tomison, Ballanden and the council at York Factory, and the letter of the same date addressed to Tomison alone,³ may have provided other reasons to help him make up his mind. Both publicly and privately Tomison was not only ordered 'to incline towards' the North West Company on the grounds that it would force the New North West Company out of business, but he was instructed in the management of the transport to the Saskatchewan settlements. On the latter subject the Governor and Committee wrote in their public letter,

The Trade from York Factory to & from Edmonton House if pursued according to the plan suggested to Us by Mr George Sutherland appears to be well calculated for lessening, in part, our heavy Expences in requiring fewer Hands than is employed at present at York and its dependent Settlements. For the Future therefore let the Factory Canoes go to and from Gordon House *only as their rout*. The Gordon House Canoes to and from the Head of Trout River and the rout from thence to Edmonton House to be conducted by the large *Boats built* under the Direction of Mr Sutherland. To navigate these Boats will require less than half the number of Men employed at present in Canoes between Trout River & Edmonton House. We therefore trust you will warmly adopt this plan by which you will convince Us of your readiness to diminish the enormous expences of the Company so immediately necessary at the present Juncture.⁴

Tomison had anticipated the orders about boats and by doing so had released men for the Beaver River expedition. This expedition had left Cumberland House before Tomison learnt that the number of new recruits sent out to York by the supply-ship was so low that it would be difficult in future to carry on the inland trade, and before he knew that he would no longer be receiving his special consignment of goods for the same purpose because Colen, blamed for withholding supplies in the past, was 'now totally removed'. So Tomison, described by Ballanden as seeming

¹ B.239/a/101, 27 August 1799.

² A.6/16, pp. 128-34; 136-7.

³ B.239/a/101, 2 September 1799.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

'to be much fretted at the disappointment of his wishes', decided to go to England.¹

XI

Relations between York and Churchill Factories had improved since 1797 when Malchom Ross had withdrawn from Reindeer Lake and the Nelson River traders had been ordered by Colen not to penetrate beyond Split Lake, but they were likely to deteriorate when it was realised that Tomison had not informed Stayner of his intention to send men to Beaver River. Tomison was, of course, falling in with the wish expressed by the Governor and Committee in 1798 that their traders from York as well as from Churchill should attempt to reach Athabasca. The Committee's letter of the following year to Tomison and his council made no reference to the subject, but to Stayner and the Churchill council they said that as the York traders 'by our Order' had withdrawn from the Athabasca venture, Ross (now returning to Hudson Bay) was appointed in charge of the expedition and would have with him the men engaged for Churchill Factory by their agent in the Orkneys. From Stayner's repeated representations the Committee had expectations of success although they were aware that men usually objected to engaging for service at Churchill because of the shortage of provisions when travelling inland. What was to be avoided was the loss of the Athabasca trade by 'the incapacity of one & the relinquishing of it by the other'.²

By the time Tomison reached London and was making his explanations to the Committee (now presided over by Sir James Winter Lake and including George Samuel Wegg as the junior member)³ James Bird had effected a number of changes as he advanced along the Saskatchewan River to Edmonton House and beyond. On reaching Cumberland House on 31 July Bird received news of events higher up the Saskatchewan from his youngest officer, John Peter Pruden,⁴ at Buckingham House. Pruden and his men were having a quiet time but the movements of competing Canadians foreshadowed an outburst of building activity⁵ in which the English company would be obliged to join. Some of this activity was caused by the arrival of traders of a third Canadian concern to oppose not only the Hudson's Bay Company, but the North West Company, and the combined interests of the Forsyth, Richardson and the Leith, Jamieson firms. This new rival was the Montreal firm of Parker, Gerrard and Ogilvy.⁶

¹ B.239/b/64, fo. 7d., Ballanden to Stayner, dated York Factory, 3 March 1800.

² A.6/16, pp. 138-9.

³ P. xxi-ii.

⁴ Pruden was about 21 years of age.

⁵ P. 195.

⁶ See p. 203, n. 2.

At Cumberland House Bird pushed on with the preparations for the expedition to Beaver River, but he quickly ran into difficulties because many of the men who had been engaged by Tomison for this purpose now refused to go whatever the consequences, and others held out for higher wages. Bird did not explain how he eventually got together the ten men who left with Peter Fidler and Charles Isham on 5 August, perhaps because he was more concerned about the three ringleaders who, having continued to refuse this duty, remained behind. He ordered them to go to York Factory where they could be dealt with by Tomison and the council before the ship returned to England, but John Irvine, Magnus Tate and Benjamin Bruce refused to go knowing that they could cause even more trouble by offering their services (with every prospect of acceptance) to the Canadians. The newcomers into the North-west trade were particularly short of experienced men.¹ Joseph Howse, in whose charge the offenders were left, was obliged by circumstances to send them after Bird because they would only consent to go up the Saskatchewan. These trouble-makers must have realised that there would be a day of reckoning,² but they probably preferred to meet this when it came and be sure of a passage home to the Orkneys rather than ending service with the Canadians in Montreal and having to find their own way home. Fidler, too, had his difficulties with the men who accompanied him and these seem to have been largely caused, rather than aggravated, by shortage of provisions. When he wanted to follow the Canadians from Lac la Biche to the mouth of Lesser Slave River early in October³ he could not do so because of lack of goods and provisions. He remarked at that time,

nor indeed would the men agree to go there, of late they have become nearly their own Masters . . . they nearly already will go only to such places as they think Proper, that is to the Saskatchewan river, and to any place where the living is mostly Fish they will not go to, and those places in general the best furs are to be got from, occasioned in my opinion solely by those at the Head of Your Honours affairs in this Country. The above has been the principal reason why the Athapescow Country has not been settled by any of Your Honours Servants these few Years back, on account of the Men being nearly their own Masters, which highly calls for a speedy alteration, to the great benefit of Your Honours Employ on the York Inland Establishment.⁴

Fidler, Isham (who was to assist on the outward journey), ten men, the Indian pilot and his wife left Cumberland House for Green Lake, Beaver

¹ P. 219.

² P. 204, n. 2.

³ P. 217, n. 1.

⁴ B.104/a/1, 6 October 1799.

River, on 5 August.¹ No mention was made of Fidler's wife and child being in the party, but it is unlikely that they remained behind. The expedition travelled in three canoes northwards to the Churchill River over the route covered by William Linklater in the preceding spring, and then continued their journey to Ile-à-la-Crosse. White Boy, the pilot, proved useless as far as Ile-à-la-Crosse, so Fidler found his own way with the aid of the journal he had kept when he had covered the ground several years before.² Along the route he not only heard from Canadians that the Churchill people were also on the way to Ile-à-la-Crosse, but saw for himself that they had made 'good roads' over which to carry their boats at every portage.

The first bateau had been brought into use on the Churchill River in 1795, two years before George Sutherland had launched his two boats on the Saskatchewan. When confronted with the task 'of routing the Canadians from their Northern Posts', Stayner and his predecessor at Churchill had first to provide the means of transport inland from the Factory. But the *Betula papyrifera* for canoe-building was only to be found some distance inland and he had neither canoe-builders nor steersmen. Stayner's appeals to Colen for canoes and steersmen went unanswered because there were transport problems enough at York Factory, so he was obliged to get help from the Southward Indians, but this proved expensive and unreliable. Stayner's next move was to build a bateau. This was taken up the Churchill in the summer of 1795 to within half a day's journey of Reindeer Lake. The Governor and Committee had expressed their satisfaction in 1796 at the building of 'batteaux & wooden canoes', but at the same time had warned Stayner against using the route followed by the York traders.³

The Churchill party of 1799 was, in fact, slightly in advance of Fidler and bound also for Green Lake. Fidler caught up with them in Primeau Lake on 20 August. The greeting he got from William Auld, who was now leading the Churchill advance towards Athabasca, could not have been enthusiastic⁴ and the good-natured Fidler must have felt an intruder, as indeed in some respects he was, the Athabasca project having been dropped by Colen in 1797, and Stayner not having yet been told of

¹ P. 197, n. 1.

² P. 170, n. 1; p. 213, n. 1.

³ B.42/b/44, fo. 42d. *et seq.* See p. iii. On 12 September 1798 Stayner wrote to York Factory, 'At the request of Mr Ballenden I have sent a batteau that has been used up this River and found to answer the purpose even better than Canoes, I am uncertain whether they will be equal servicable at York as it is many years since I saw that River . . . Mr Ballenden will be the best judge how far they can be of use to you the common cargoe they take here is 36 bundles from 75 to 80 lbs. weight independant of Provisions for the Journey for 5 Men, they row faster then Canoes and in coming down the Rapids are much superior . . .'. B.239/b/66, fo. 66.

⁴ P. 213, n. 4.

Tomison's interest in it.¹ Fidler admitted Auld's prior claim to settle at Green Lake and as canoes were an easier means of transport than boats when searching for another locality in which to settle, agreed to go farther afield.² With Fidler in the lead because he now had a guide, the rival parties continued their journey from Primeau Lake. En route Auld left William Linklater and six men to build a post on Ile-à-la-Crosse Lake³ and he himself settled near the Canadian house on Green Lake.⁴ Fidler, on White Boy's recommendation that Barren Ground (Meadow) Lake was the best place for provisions as well as furs, went there, but because of lack of wood for both building purposes and fuel, the choice of site was limited and Bolsover House (undoubtedly named after Bolsover in Fidler's native county)⁵ was erected too far away from water for either comfort or convenience.⁶

White Boy, being no longer useful, was paid off on 5 September, but no replacement could be found to guide Fidler to Lac la Biche because the Bungees there had intimidated the Indians of the Meadow Lake area. These wretched Indians may also have feared the North Westers who regarded Fidler's advance as an intrusion into the country they considered their special preserve.⁷ Leaving Hugh Sabbeston in charge at the Bolsover House site until the arrival there of John Peter Pruden from Buckingham House, Fidler and three men⁸ set off by canoe for Lac la Biche on Sunday, 8 September 1799. According to his official journal Fidler started with a 'plan of the way' obtained from Indians and the knowledge that the journey would take about fourteen days.⁹ His party also started without provisions except for the 3 lbs. meat per man obtained the day before and the certainty that they would have to hunt for the rest of their food. On 21 September, after living on an insufficient diet of ducks, geese and swans, Fidler and his men reached the 'mouth of the Moose Lake Creek where the Goods came through from Buckingham to Red Deers Lake' under the guidance of some free Canadians¹⁰ and, five days later, arrived near Angus Shaw's post on Lac la Biche.¹¹ Here Fidler found the party from Buckingham House preparing logs for building the post (which he

¹ Tomison wrote to Stayner on 11 September 1799, 'Mr James Bird had Instructions to send the Canoes up the Beaver River of which two was to stop there and the other four to proceed to the Red Deers Lake . . . I hope should your People and ours be on the same spot, they will be unanimous together, which will enable them to oppose the Canadians more strongly . . . Had the Company sent out Men this Year, I was fully determined to have sent Men to the Athapiscow Country next Spring with two Canoes and four more in the Summer as the Canadians have more Houses there, than you and us could oppose in three Years to come.' B.42/b/42, p. 2; B.42/c/1, fos. 1-2.

² P. 213, n. 4.

³ P. 217, n. 6.

⁴ P. 217, n. 5.

⁵ P. xv, n. 2.

⁶ P. 212, n. 2.

⁷ P. 213; B.104/a/1, fo. 14.

⁸ P. 208; p. 212, notes 2 and 4.

⁹ B.104/a/1, fo. 8-8d.

¹⁰ The goods sent by Bird on 3 September. P. 206.

¹¹ P. 216, n. 2; B.104/a/1; J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966), p. 116 *et seq.*

named Greenwich House) and living 'indifferently' on fish.¹ Without an interpreter, for the unreliable John Richards had again deserted,² and against a hostile Angus Shaw, Fidler started to compete for a share of the trade of the Ottawas and Bungees who, he said, had been 'from their infancy acquainted with the Canadians as they come from towards their Country, which makes them so much attached to them'.³ Fidler's trade for season 1799-1800 amounted to 1073 made beaver,⁴ but he had accomplished more than trade, for besides surveying the new ground he had covered as far as Greenwich House, Fidler had also examined the route from there to the mouth of Lesser Slave River as well as the water communication between the Beaver and Saskatchewan Rivers.⁵

The results of the Bolsover House trade, which ended early in April 1800, amounted to only 190 made beaver (the lowest amount made by the posts under Bird's command) and by agreement between Bird and Auld, the goods remaining on hand were transferred to the nearby Green Lake post for the benefit of the Churchill trade.⁶ This agreement had been arrived at after they had corresponded and met at Edmonton House in January 1800. Not knowing that Malchom Ross had been accidentally drowned while on his way up Churchill River to 'the Athaw-pawpiska Lake',⁷ Auld was expecting reinforcements for use in a determined effort to push northwards, but he also required canoes, liquor and provisions for the enterprise, all of which he hoped to get from the Saskatchewan District, as well as an interpreter.⁸ But, as he was to learn, there were no spare canoes on the Saskatchewan, and at Edmonton House during 1799-1800 the prospects for obtaining pemmican were poor because mild winter conditions were causing the buffalo to remain out on the far distant plains instead of moving northwards to the sheltered scrublands.⁹ Animals became so scarce along the upper Saskatchewan that the Indians, instead

¹ B.104/a/1, fo. 13d. At the end of the season (26 September to 10 May 1800) the fish caught by Fidler's men at Lac la Biche totalled: 1970 tickameg, 558 pike, 144 perch, 132 suckers. B.104/a/1, fo. 36.

² P. 216, notes 4, 5.

³ B.104/a/1, 13 January 1800.

⁴ B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

⁵ P. 228, n. 1; p. 245, n. 1.

⁶ P. 241; B.84/a/1, 22 April 1800.

⁷ Ross had been re-engaged by the Governor and Committee on 9 January 1799 for three-years at £80 per annum to go to Churchill '8c from thence to proceed to the Athapacow River with the Churchill Traders'. A.1/47, fo. 122.

⁸ Pp. 218, 224; p. 230, n. 1; B.42/b/42, pp. 8, 15.

⁹ Pp. 226, 228, 229, 235, 238, 241. For a discussion on irregular migrations in the 'Saskatchewan Territory', see F. G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo. A Critical Study of the Species in Its Wild State* (Toronto, 1951), pp. 570-95. See also Map 39, 'Forest Regions', in *Atlas of Canada* (Ottawa, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch, 1957). It is also of interest to note that John Sutherland at his post not far from the Indian Elbow (see p. lxxiv) of the Assiniboine River wrote on 30 November 1799, 'It has been the mildest Weather this Month Past I ever seed in Hudsons Bay, which is the cause that they are no Buffalo come as yet, and I am apprehensive that they will not be many this Year which will make Provisions both scarce and dear . . .'. On 5 January 1800 he said that 'expectations of the Buffalo coming are vanished'. B.119/a/5.

of hunting fur, were obliged to spend all their efforts in feeding their families. Bird mentioned Fidler's Christmas visit and Pruden's New Year visit in the Edmonton journal, but omitted to refer to any discussions he had with them about Greenwich and Bolsover Houses. Nor did Bird do more than refer to Auld's unexpected arrival at, or departure from, Edmonton House in the middle of January, even though the Churchill trader's requests must have caused him some concern. And Bird, no doubt in error, omitted any reference whatever to the journey he himself made shortly after Auld's departure on 20 January. This was to Greenwich House on Lac la Biche. As Bird and Fidler had met so recently the object of this journey, made in company with a party of North Westers, was no doubt to amend rather than settle, as Fidler said, plans for the coming summer. The outcome was that at the end of season 1799-1800 Bird met Auld's requests to the extent of providing him with one man (John Forbes), ten bags of pemmican, two canoes and the trading goods left on hand at the abandoned Bolsover House.¹ For this assistance Stayner expressed his thanks to John Ballanden in a letter dated 14 July 1800, but he was understandably angry at what he could rightly call an intrusion by the York men and not only quoted the Governor and Committee's 1799 remarks to the Churchill council about Athabasca, but suggested that men not required in the Saskatchewan District should be transferred to the Churchill establishment as that move would be more beneficial than 'to send people into our River to collect Furs and carry down to York'.²

Fidler's expedition to Beaver River was the first of several new ventures which Bird launched on his way up the Saskatchewan River in 1799. When he reached Buckingham House he arranged for Henry Hallett to winter downstream at Turtlelake River where the North Westers had already established a post during the summer and to which they had attracted the Southward Indians who formerly traded at Buckingham House. On 28 September representatives of the two other rival concerns arrived at Turtlelake River to join in the competition for the trade, young Hallett's share of which, at his Somerset House, amounted to 983 made beaver by the end of the season.³

When Bird at last reached Edmonton House on 8 September 1799 he immediately became engrossed with plans for a post at 'the Stoney Mountain'⁴ where John McDonald had already arranged to have the

¹ P. 231, n. 2; pp. 241.

² B.42/b/42, pp. 46-7; *supra*, p. lxvi.

³ P. 207, n. 3; B.204/a/1; B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

⁴ On his journey up the Saskatchewan Bird had closely followed the instructions he had received from Tomison. These instructions are referred to in a letter from Tomison to Thomas Stayner at Churchill, dated York Factory, 11 September 1799. B.42/c/1, fos. 1-2; B.42/b/42, p. 2.

North West Company's Rocky Mountain House built. The aim of both men was to attract to the spot the Kootenay Indians, whose country was said to be rich in beaver.¹ An advance party of thirteen went off from Edmonton House in one canoe and one boat, and Bird himself left on 14 September to travel overland on horseback in company with three men. Because provisions were reported hard to come by three Indian hunters were added to his party. Bird wished to test conditions and prospects for himself in the unfamiliar, rugged country which obviously did not, when he saw it, appeal to him so much as 'the agreeable plains below'.² On 24 September he reached the spot above the mouth of the Clearwater where the rival posts were to be built, but another six days passed before the river party arrived and reported that boats were unsuitable for the upper part of the Saskatchewan. On his return journey to Edmonton by the river route Bird recognised this to be true and determined to have two large canoes built for future transport work. He gave credit to Gilbert Laughton for having got one boat to the site of the new post which he, Bird, named Acton House, thereby honouring the Middlesex parish from which he came and where the Governor of the Company, Samuel Wegg, had his home.³ On 6 October Laughton, one of the handiest, if not the most expert, tradesman in the Company's service, was left in charge of Acton House. At the end of season 1799-1800 he had a total of 2289 made beaver for shipment to London.⁴

During his return journey by canoe from Acton House to Edmonton House in October 1799 Bird saw the post which the North Westers were building near the mouth of Wabamun Creek to attract there 'the other little companies' and thereby overstrain their resources. The trick looked like succeeding for Bird met representatives of 'Ogilby and Company' bound for the neighbourhood of White Mud Fort.⁵ Following his arrival at Edmonton on 10 October Bird also made preparations to compete against the 'little companies' and on 2 November sent John Park and five men to build some eighty miles higher up the Saskatchewan. The post they built was undoubtedly named in honour of Nelson, whose victory at the Battle of the Nile (1 August 1798) would only recently have become known to them by means of news from Montreal brought from Grand Portage by the North Westers. At the end of season 1799-1800 Park took out from Nelson House skins valued 295 made beaver.⁶

Besides carrying out the plans made by Tomison, Bird had additional problems to tackle. He continued to use Edmonton House as the

¹ Pp. 211, 212.

² P. 211.

³ P. 214. Wegg retired in November 1799. See pp. xx-i.

⁴ B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

⁵ P. 214, n. 4; p. 215.

⁶ B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

Company's Saskatchewan headquarters during 1799-1800 and lived on friendly terms with James Hughes, his North West Company neighbour at Fort Augustus. They each had to oppose not only the New North Westers (who had first come there in the previous trading season), but also the newcomers outfitted by the Montreal house of Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy. Bird and Hughes agreed to help each other so that opposition to these two rival groups could be made more effective, and it was because these opponents were expected to return to the area for season 1800-1 that Bird, before he took out his returns of trade, sent two men up river to build a post between Acton and Nelson Houses near where the North Westers were erecting one.¹ But for all the energy expended along the Saskatchewan River during season 1799-1800 there was a general decrease in Bird's trade returns. Those at Edmonton House dropped to 4822 made beaver.² Bearing in mind the additional opposition, the two new posts (Acton and Nelson Houses) to which some of Edmonton's former trade was attracted, and the scarcity of buffalo making it necessary for the Indians to spend more time than usual hunting for food, the result could not have been altogether unexpected by Bird. But even with the addition of the returns from Nelson and Acton Houses the total of 7406 made beaver fell considerably below that of the preceding year.

There was also a decline in returns at the remaining posts on the Saskatchewan. Buckingham House, from which a line of communication was kept open with Auld at Green Lake and with Pruden at Bolsover House, was operated during 1799-1800 by Alexander Flet, an experienced Indian trader drawn from the ranks of the tradesmen. Besides David Thompson at Fort George, Flet also had to compete against 'new oppositions' for the 1972 made beaver he obtained in trade.³ A further 1273 made beaver traded at Carlton House was added by Joseph Howse and another 1587 came from Cumberland House where Magnus Twatt, responsible to Howse, had spent most of the season and had managed the trade.⁴ So from the Saskatchewan River posts and from Bolsover and Greenwich Houses Bird had a cargo of 14,484 made beaver to take down to the Bay-side in the spring of 1800. En route Bird was joined by Robert Longmoor. Information on his activities in the Swan River District during the past season can be found in the 'Red River Charlton House Journal', from which it appears that he operated at 'New Carlton House' (Assiniboine

¹ Pp. 215, 226, 242; p. 243, n. 1.

² B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

³ P. 32, n. 3; p. 221, n. 2; B.20/a/1, fo. 6; B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.; Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), Vol. II, p. 561n.

⁴ Pp. 220, 221, 232, 236; B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

River) and Swan River House.¹ Longmoor's former Albany opponent, John Sutherland, who returned to the neighbourhood of the Indian Elbow, reported him as having entered into competition with Canadians 'about 16 Miles farther to the Westward then . . . the year before, right in the way of the Inds.'² Longmoor obtained fur returns amounting to 1048 made beaver,³ a total which showed an improvement on that of the previous outfit, but Sutherland complained that the York man's success was made at his expense:⁴ in turn Longmoor grumbled that Sutherland was 'the worst of Neighbours' because he plundered Swan River District debts from the Indians.⁵ But their competition finished at the end of the season when, acting on instructions, Longmoor left the Company's future trade in the Assiniboine River area to be carried on solely by the men from the Albany inland establishment.⁶

XII

Bird's journal for 1799-1800 ends with his arrival at Oxford House on his return inland from York Factory. There is no surviving record of the continuation of his progress to the Saskatchewan in the summer of 1800, or of the plans he set in motion before Tomison once more arrived in the district to resume control. The *Prince of Wales*, Captain Henry Hanwell, in which Tomison sailed from Britain arrived off Five Fathom Hole on 8 September.⁷ On completing his arrangements Tomison lost no time in starting his journey inland. There is no record of the discussions he had had while in London, and though it appears that his influence, so far as Athabasca was concerned, had prevailed over Stayner's, his victory had not been an easy one. This impression is gained from the Governor and Committee's letter of May 1800 to John Ballanden and the York Factory council. After expressing concern about the decreased trade returns for outfit 1798-99 the Committee requested an explanation about the cost of obtaining the Swan River District trade as the expenses incurred were more than double the returns, and continued,

¹ B.28/a/5, 1799-1800, *passim*.

² B.3/b/37, fo. 33; B.159/a/5, 5 December 1799.

³ B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

⁴ B.3/b/37, fo. 33. Sutherland's trade was 900 made beaver less than in 1798-99 according to B.22/a/7, fo. 28d. When he arrived at the Indian Elbow in the autumn of 1799 Sutherland found that his post had been destroyed by Canadians, so he moved '5 or 6 miles over land farther up the river' or about fifteen miles by river. B.159/a/5, 5 October 1799.

⁵ B.28/a/5, 15 February 1800.

⁶ P. 224; B.28/a/5, 22 March 1800.

⁷ C.4/1; C.1/748.

when we consider the Exports we have supplied you with the large Number of Men in your department Boats, Canoes & every other Article which ought to produce an increasing Trade, we are led to conceive there must be some Mismanagement at the Inland Settlements especially when we know that the Canadians for many Years have passed by Cumberland House to go to the Northward and return with Hundreds of the finest Furs the Country Produces. It has been urged as a reason for not going to the Northward that you have not Men sufficient for the Journey – are we to understand by this that you have not Men enough to oppose the Canadians & in that Oposition to be constantly in Feuds & Quarrels with each other? if so you may be assured we shall never furnish you with Men sufficient to answer this purpose while we are a Company. It has also been alledged that the Country to the Northward is destitute of Provisions *except Fish*, but we know this is not the Fact for the Canadian Traders procure large Quantities of Provisions dried Buffalo &c &c which they take with them to their Colleagues down the River to their Station near Cumberland House where they Winter. The Country to the Northward is of extent enough to employ with Success Ten times the Number of Men that the Canadians or ourselves will ever be capable of sending there, and surely a part of those at Cumberland House might have been sent forward to come in for a Share of the Trade at least with the Canadians. If the Companys Servants were as Active as the Canadians are they would reap the advantage of their Industry as well as their Employers. The Character of a British Subject in the Service of the Hudsons Bay Company one would suppose would be a Stimulus sufficient to counteract in some measure the Canadians and not suffer themselves to be outwitted or forestalled by them, but we again particularly recommend you to be on the most friendly Terms with the Canadians for if any serious Consequences should arise from your Quarrells & Disputes it would be very difficult to find redress here even on application to Government.

And, after again expressing their belief that the Athabasca country was large enough for the York and Churchill men 'to steer clear of each other', they unrealistically remarked,

If the Natives could be prevail'd on to visit both these Factories as they did formerly it would be attended with great advantages. The Northward Trade is the Chief dependance of the Canadians & if a small Number of the Natives should be induced by Presents or

particular Kindnesses shewn them to visit the Factory much real Benefit might be derived from it.¹

But long before 1800 the Northern Indians had become accustomed to the Canadian traders taking 'the articles necessary to their comfort and convenience' into their country and, by being freed from the necessity of making 'long, toilsome, and dangerous journies' to the Bay-side, had become reconciled to paying higher prices for them.² The changed circumstances were tactfully ignored when Ballanden and the council replied to London in the following September. They answered that they understood that the provisions obtained by the Canadians at Cumberland House came from the Barren Grounds and that Athabasca was a country 'by no means remarkable for any kind of provisions except Fish'. They concluded this subject by saying that Tomison would no doubt avail himself of the first opportunity of getting a share of the Athabasca trade.³

In May 1800 the Governor and Committee had also written to Stayner at Churchill

The Trade lately pursued from York towards the Athapascow Country has been relinquished in order to further it from Churchill but we now see clearly that we have been premature in our Decisions on that subject and we fear we shall severely feel the ill Effects, of listening too readily to the illdigested Plans of interested advisers. The Trade to that Country than which none had the Appearance of being more productive seems dwindled to nothing.⁴

But no clear-cut directive was given about future conduct. In reply Stayner bluntly told his employers that he did not understand their remarks about 'the Trade procured from York towards the Athapiscow Country' because nothing had come from there since Turnor and Ross returned in 1792. He also said that it was wide of the truth for the York men to name as Athabasca the country comprising the Nelson River area, the country adjacent to Cumberland House, or the Churchill River area in which they had operated posts. He thought that it was because the Saskatchewan River trade was declining that Tomison had set in motion the 1799 advance towards Athabasca, and that it was 'literally impossible that ever this Northwd. Trade' could be run so well from York as from Churchill, a forecast that was eventually to prove inaccurate. And towards

¹ A.6/16, pp. 176-8.

² Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; In the Years 1789 and 1793* (London, 1801), pp. xiii, xci, referring to 'the people of Athabasca' who formerly went down to Churchill.

³ B.239/b/79, fo. 30d.

⁴ A.6/16, pp. 187-8.

the end of his letter Stayner said that for want of men (only six had arrived in 1799) 'we were obliged to decline settling the Atha pis cow Lake' during the season which had just ended.¹ But Ile-à-la-Crosse had been reached and the post there, as well as the one on Green Lake, were already outfitted for season 1800-1.

The Company's letters of 1800 to the depots on Hudson and James Bays² contain at least three general directives of particular interest. The chiefs at all the Factories were informed of the introduction of a revised method of keeping accounts relating to the expenditure of goods, because the old method of referring to goods in terms of made beaver was unintelligible to the Committee who had 'no sort of Clue' as to the way in which the trade was conducted. In future the inland traders were to account for the way in which the goods were disposed of in books ruled to pattern and to send them to England each year so that the Committee could form an idea of what had 'been done with the large Quantities of Goods sent Inland'. The second directive informed all chiefs that 'Particular Transactions may be always communicated in the Journals but Diaries of Winds & Weather are to us useless & need not be Kept'.³ Except for the third and somewhat querulous directive, 'Changing the Names of dependant Settlements not only mislead but often times perplex us when referring to the Maps let it therefore be avoided', the capital city of the Province of Alberta would almost certainly not be known to-day as Edmonton. As it happened, obedience to the Committee's order (as each post in succession was built after removal from the 1795 site) resulted in the name bestowed by Tomison surviving beyond the fur-trade era.⁴

¹ B.42/b/44, fos. 76, 77d.

² A.6/16, pp. 152-93.

³ The Committee's instruction accounts for the fact that Peter Fidler, interested in such information, sent his 'Diaries of Winds & Weather' to Joseph Colen, who presented them to the Royal Society. Royal Society, M.C.1(40), Colen to Sir Joseph Banks dated Cirencester, 29 December 1811. The keeping of meteorological records was resumed officially in 1814 when the Committee ordered reports on the weather and progress of the seasons to be noticed in the journals, and sent instruments to the Bay so that 'Registers of the Thermometer' could be kept at some posts. The information was needed by the Committee to enable them to 'judge which of the productions of European Cultivation' might be successfully grown at the trading posts. A.6/18, p. 213.

⁴ The exact date of the closing of the Edmonton House with which this volume is concerned cannot be accurately determined because the post journals for seasons 1800-1 to 1805-6 are missing. By September 1806 the post then called Edmonton House was on the site of the present City of Edmonton. This second Edmonton House was operated until 1810 when it was replaced by the third Edmonton House which was situated at the forks of the Saskatchewan River and White Earth Creek (and was therefore below the first Edmonton House). Whilst the third Edmonton House was still operating during winter 1812-13 the fourth Edmonton House was being built close to the site of No. 2, i.e. the present City of Edmonton. No. 4 came into operation in the spring of 1813 when No. 3 was closed. In 1821, following the coalition, the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton House (No. 4) was chosen for joint occupation because it was more comfortable and commodious than the rival post. But on account of over-crowding and because the former strife and hatred between English and Canadian servants made it uncertain how they would settle down together, most of the Canadians (at their own request) were accommodated in the North West Company's fort during the

The progress of events along the Saskatchewan River during outfit 1800-1 cannot be followed in detail because most of the post records for that area are missing¹ and it is not possible to reach definite conclusions on a number of points for lack of evidence in those which do survive. But a general idea of the trade and of James Bird's objectives on the upper Saskatchewan, where he was personally responsible, can be gleaned. Tomison did not, as expected, return to his 'old Residence at Edmonton House';² instead he made his headquarters at Cumberland House where he arrived on 14 October after a journey hindered by gales, rain, snow and ice. Three days later he wrote to James Bird announcing his arrival and remarking, 'I am sorry that Mr Fidler had not been sent to the Northward in lieu of the Souther'd, as it is only a scheme to lead your attention and the new Companies from that Quarter'.³ Because the fall packet was delayed at Carlton House from November to the end of January by disobedient servants who refused to take it on the next stage of its journey up the Saskatchewan, this letter did not reach Bird until 14 February 1801.⁴

Meanwhile Bird, after leaving James Sutherland, the writer, in charge at Edmonton House, had continued higher up the Saskatchewan in company with Duncan McGillivray. They reached the rival Acton and Rocky Mountain Houses on 23 October.⁵ Bird, young and active, no doubt moved around as he had done in the previous season, but the fact that the Acton House trade returns for 1800-1 showed a marked increase over those of the previous season whilst those for Edmonton showed a corresponding drop, suggests that the higher post was his headquarters and that he, as the chief man on the upper Saskatchewan, attracted the Company's customers to the Rocky Mountain post at the expense of the trade of the other houses.⁶ He replied, however, to Tomison's letter on

winter of 1821-22. The 'new Fort' at Edmonton was described by Duncan Finlayson on 1 September 1831 as 'the neatest, most commodious & yet the most compact', and as 'the best adapted for defence of any Inland Establishmt.'. For a short period this 'new Fort' was also known as 'Fort Sanspareil'. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on Edmonton House.

¹ It cannot even be established that they ever existed because listing the journals (with the names of the authors) in the 'Inventory of Books, &c' (p. xix, n. 3) ceased after the shipment received in London in 1800. After that the Inventory merely records where the 'Journals &c' received from 1801-3, 1804-5 and 1805-6 were stored. A.64/45. The 'Catalogue of Library &c' classified as A.64/52 was started in or after 1815, the date shown in the watermark of the paper forming the first part of the volume. In this Catalogue the earlier journals are listed merely with authors' names, the later journals (written during outfit 1800-1 and afterwards) are also numbered, beginning at number one. Of the posts under the control of Tomison and Bird, and of Ballenden, the list for 1800-1 includes journals for Cumberland, Island and Chesterfield Houses, and York Factory only.

² B.239/a/104.

³ B.49/a/30.

⁴ B.92/a/1, fo. 10; B.49/c/1, fo. 1.

⁵ J. B. Tyrrell, 'David Thompson and the Rocky Mountains' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1934), XV, 40.

⁶ Sutherland, however, attributed the Indians' desertion of Edmonton House to 'there being nothing near the place for them to kill'. P. 282.

19 February from Nelson House.¹ Among other matters² Bird referred to the effect that the change in the 'Standard for Wolves' from one to half a beaver would have on the trade of Edmonton House and the other Saskatchewan posts, especially as the London Committee had also ordered that as few wolves as possible (and of those only properly treated skins) were to be traded because of the high import duty into England of 7s. od. per skin, large or small, and the low prices obtained for them in the saleroom.³ The trade in grey foxes from the Slave Indians promised to be as good as in the previous season, and on the Saskatchewan the trade returns at the time of writing amounted to nearly 6000 made beaver, although only a small proportion was actually in beaver skins. Bird continued,

From the unlimited liberality of all parties to the Southerd Indians which enables them to gratify their love of idleness and war (a large band of our best hunters sett off to war in Sepr. last and are not yet returned) with the extreme scarcity of Beaver but this last circumstance in particular has occasioned this part of the trade's dwindling to a mere nothing nor can it much recover till one of the three present Contending parties withdraw (which however I think must soon happen as the new Cos. is every where opposed with the utmost vigour and success) or till some Country is discovered in which Beaver are more numerous than here.

A number of Beaver were said to be discovered last summer by a war party of Indians and in Decr. last Messrs. McGilvery & Pruden⁴ sett off with men to ascertain if possible the truth of this report; after travelling many days thro' the mountain in which they never saw the mark of a Beaver their guide from an accident was unable to accompany them farther; the former Gentleman however proceeded on alone till the snow had increased to the depth of five feet and the precipices became so high & Steep that he could find no method (being unacquainted with the proper passes) of decending one

¹ B.49/c/1, fos. 1-4.

² P. 279, n. 1; p. 284, n. 1.

³ A.6/16, p. 180.

⁴ This was on the second journey made by Duncan McGillivray after his arrival at Rocky Mountain House on 23 October 1800. On the first journey McGillivray was accompanied by David Thompson who recorded: 'On the 17 November we sett off with 4 Men and an Indian guide to visit the great Camps of Peagan Indians on the Askow River, and on December 3rd returned to the House'. Thompson also remarked that McGillivray set out soon after 'with an indian Guide and 3 Men . . . to examine the defiles of the Mountains by the north Branch [Brazeau River] and in about 14 days returned finding that they were apparently impassable for Horses &c. Thus ended the year 1800'. J. B. Tyrrell, editor, 'Discoveries from the East Side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean by David Thompson' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1934), XV, 43. For J. B. Tyrrell's outlines of the routes followed by McGillivray on both journeys, see Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), pp. lxxvi-vii.

which he had made a shift to Climb from this side much more to ascend others which presented themselves beyond; he was Consequently under the necessity of returning.

It was my full intention last winter to send Canoes to the northward the following summer preparative measures were taken inland accordingly & Mr Fidler came down to Cumberland House for that purpose; on my arrival at Gordon House I proposed it to Mr Ballandeen who seemed to be doubtfull whether such a step would be agreeable to the Honourable Co. or not since Churchill Claimed this country, had the presumption to think that alone she could effectually settle it & it had actually been (if I may use the expression) ceded to her as a field fit for her activity. Mr Auld on meeting with our Canoes last summer expressed great surprize at our sending goods to a Country which he could sufficiently furnish & told me in course of the winter that, he intended sending goods to the Atha pus kow the following summer requesting me at the same time to supply him with Canoes & Provisions for the purpose. I accordingly gave him two good canoes & 10 Bags of pemmican besides four that I sent to be lodged at Isle la Cross in case we might require them ourselves;¹ this is all we could possibly spare him; it seems however that no person has yet gone there.

Confident that Churchill alone would never settle the whole of so extensive a Country notwithstanding her boast (that, York need not send any goods north of Cumberland) & that there would consequently be room for both parties to act without interfering with each other since a Jealousy was likely to exist I would have ventured to send a few Canoes there as Mr Ballanden gave me his consent, but here arose the principal difficulty, few of our steersmen were fit for this expedition most of them being men superanuated, comparatively speaking by their long services, still more few willing to undertake it not any without such advance of wages as, under the aforementioned circumstances & ignorant of the real wishes of the Honourable Co. I could by no means venture to give them thro' fear of being censured for presumption instead of meeting with applause for my zeal and besides I had every reason to think that the very next season would determine whether York was permitted to make settlements in the North or not, that if she was, you yourself would in all probability return to see them formed and that I should consequently be Justified in neglecting for one season (the only time I should have left room for censure) to settle a part which others

¹ Pp. lxviii-lxxi; p. 213, n. 4; pp. 217-18; p. 230, n. 1; p. 231, n. 1; p. 241.

vested with ample power and under better opportunities had failed to do in the course of several years . . .

That I have long been an advocate for sending Canoes to the North I may venture to appeal to your own knowledge of my sentiments having frequently taken the liberty to declare them publicly. As to the south Branch I never considered it as a place that could come in competition with the Northward in any respect but having declined sending to the latter place I thought it necessary to send to the former to secure our part of the slave Indian Trade (and even with hopes of improving it) since the Canadians had determined on going there; not merely I presume in hopes of its diverting our attention from the Northward No; I am confident they do not entertain so mean an opinion of our understandings as to flatter themselves that they can be able to lead us any where to the injury of the interest it is our duty to forward and if they were weak enough to flatter themselves that they should succeed by such a simple proceeding in preventing the new Co's. from going there they have been much mistaken six Canoes of these having gone by the way of Edmonton House where they made a portage of forty miles and we lately hear arrived at the Atha puskow Lake with the loss of one Canoe & thirteen pieces of trading goods. The NWt. Co. seem in reality to have had other and much more extensive views in settling the South Branch no less than by degrees to open a communication with the natives inhabiting the Wt. side of the mountain and even cross that formidable barrier itself with goods, which is found to be impracticable from this river. Messrs. McGilvery & Thompson are going the ensuing summer with a party of men to examine the country west of the mountain¹ as far as the borders of the South sea & ascertain if possible whether as is supposed an advantageous trade can be carried on with those parts or not either from hence or China . . .

As we shall have dried provisions sufficient to answer every

¹ In trying to show during his journeys made towards the end of 1800 (p. lxxix, n. 4) that he could equal David Thompson in bearing hardship, Duncan McGillivray (according to Thompson), 'took no precautions against the effect of exposure to the weather, wet feet and the consequence was that early in February he began to feel attacks of acute rheumatism which became so violent as to oblige him to keep his bed, and even the warm weather moderated the disease to allow him to go on crutches, in which state he embarked for Fort William. Before leaving the Place, he ordered Mr. Hughes and myself with 6 Men to cross the Mountains and discover the Columbia River, but the arrangements were such that I saw plainly the whole was hopeless. Mr. Hughes engaged a Nahathaway Indian Guide who conducted thro' defiles which at length had no outlet, and we returned and thus ended the business of 1801'. Tyrrell, 'Discoveries from the East Side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean by David Thompson', p. 43. See also Glover, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxvii. Fidler referred to this journey made by Thompson and Hughes in the entry for 31 December 1792 in his 'Journal of a Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains, in 1792 & 3' written or revised at a later date. E.3/2, pp. 1-29.

purpose I have desired Mr Linklatter to send for twelve or fifteen Bags of pimmican which he requests & propose sending a few more to be lodged at Isle a la Cross for the Canoes which I naturally conclude you intend sending to the North next summer.¹

A band of Cootanaha's amounting to twenty six men arrived at the upper settlements in Octr. last after surmounting by their own accounts the greatest dangers & difficulties.² The NWt. Co. having received private intelligence of their being on the way to the Houses sent off a party of men who met them a considerable distance in the Mountain and took the principal part of their Furs amounting its said to 100 Br. & 15 poor Bears & Conducted them to the settlements, six of them therefore only sent to our house with four Bears which the muddy river Indians kept from the Canadians by force. I arrived at Acton House two days after the Cottanaha's had left it & found that two Canadians³ had accompanied them away had I arrived in time I would have endeavoured to prevail on some person to have gone with them also. They were expected to visit the settlements again either in January or the month of May hitherto we have heard nothing further of them . . . there are at present five houses viz. Acton (or the Stonney mountain) House, this or Nelson House Edmonton one at the summer berry river (for the Bungees) and the

¹ During season 1800-1 William Linklater was in charge at Ile-à-la-Crosse where he had twelve men: the Canadians numbered 'upwards of 40'. John Forbes (p. 244, n. 1) apparently managed the trade at Green Lake where he had eleven men: the Canadians had '38 Officers & Men'. According to Thomas Stayner, the Canadians at these two places traded about 12,000 made beaver while his men 'were only able to get 1,800'. B.239/b/65, fos. 15d.-16; B.42/a/125, 21 June 1801.

² See J. B. Tyrrell, editor, 'Discoveries from the East Side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean by David Thompson' in *Canadian Historical Review*, (Toronto, 1934), XV, 42, for David Thompson's account of the journey he made to meet the Kootenay Indians (27 men and 7 women) and his remarks about 'having frequently . . . to fight . . . way thro' the Peagan Indians by force of Arms' to lead them to Rocky Mountain House, where they arrived on 20 October 1800. The Kootenays left Rocky Mountain House two days later under the care of La Gassé and Le Blanc, who were to winter with them and who were probably the first white men to cross the Rockies at the head of the Saskatchewan River. See also Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxxv-vi.

³ On 31 December 1792, during his 'Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains, in 1792 & 3', Peter Fidler recorded meeting Kootenay Indians for the first time. The only version of his journal which has survived (E.3/2, pp. 1-69) was written at a later date and in the entry for 31 December 1792 Fidler inserted: 'In the fall of 1800 28 Cottonnaw men with 2 Women came into Acton House our uppermost settlement in the Saskatchewan river with a few furs. This is the first time they have ever seen a House - after remaining here a few Days (no other Indians being near the House) 2 Canadians accompanied them to their Country to examine it & learn whether or not any Beaver in any quantity was to be found there but as these 2 men could neither read or write, what remarks they made was merely verbal to the following purport. They was 17 nights after leaving the House before they arrived at the Indian Tents where they had left their families on the West side of the mountain. They were 28 nights in returning from the time they left the Cottonnaw Tent before they arrived at the House which was on the 23d May 1801'. Fidler then went on to give an account of the country over which the two men, Le Blanc and La Gassi, travelled whilst with the Kootenay Indians. See p. 112 for mention of two Kootenay Indians who went to Edmonton House in 1798.

Island House this last is situated on an Island about fifteen miles above old Buckingham and is intended for the principal settlement in the river. If you should find it inconvenient to come up early enough yourself I hope you will be good enough to let me know the Houses you wish should be kept up during the summer as well as the people you would desire to have left in charge of them (Hugh Sabbeston & John Park are the only men here fit for this whose Contracts do not expire the present year) as early as possible.

We expect to be able to make six canoes, have built one large Boat and a small one for the use of Oxford House . . .¹

Tomison received this letter on 4 April and two days later replied,

I had the Satisfaction to receive your long letter of the 19th of Feby. which I cannot pretend to answer, as it would take up too much of your time to read it and not be very satisfactory to our employers I therefore decline it. I never meant throwing any reflections on your Conduct in former times and much less now, but you take that up too hastily . . . as to the Houses to be kept up during the summer, you are on the spot and no man can be a better Judge than yourself . . . as also those men you think most fit to take care of them, should you think proper to stay yourself it will Be very agreeable. The Honourable Company has sent you £80 p. Annum for three years and permission to send your son to England.

The Old Company talks of abandoning the Settlement Where Mr Howse is [Carlton House] and in Course we will be obliged to do the same as we cannot spare men to stay there all Summer, their is a report here that Blackfeet Indians killed a frenchmen at the mouth of the south Branch, and this summer they are expected to the Houses and if so they may do mischief. I thought of coming up in the month of April by water, but we are likely to have a late Breaking up, which with other Circumstances . . . has put it out of power to reache the upper Settlements before it would be too late . . .²

The 'General State of the Trade' for outfit 1800-1³ shows that 3551 made beaver were obtained from Acton House and 2087 from Edmonton House. The unidentified trader at Nelson House procured 1212, and another unidentified trader obtained 991 from Summerberry River House. The last-named post appears to have had an existence of one year only and its name suggests that it was located on the Pembina River, but nothing definite except the amount of its trade returns is known about it. Nor has

¹ B.49/c/1, fos. 1-4.

² B.49/a/30.

³ B.239/d/123, fo. 28.

any information been found to prove that the post John Peter Pruden was preparing to build in May 1800 about forty miles above Nelson House ever came into operation.¹ Did it perhaps replace Park's Nelson House and bear that name in accordance with the Company's directive about changing, or rather not changing, the names of trading posts? The 'General State of the Trade' also lists 83 made beaver as coming from Greenwich House, but in view of Bird's remarks about not sending men to the northward, quoted above, it is difficult to reconcile this entry with the facts as at present known.

Both Buckingham and Somerset Houses were closed in 1800, but a new post (called Island House) consisting of a storehouse 24 by 16 feet and a dwelling-house 46 by 23 feet was built by Henry Hallett on a site chosen in advance by James Sutherland, the writer, and said by Bird to be 'situated on an Island about fifteen miles above old Buckingham and . . . intended for the principal settlement in this river'.² According to John McDonald of Garth, Fort George (the rival of Buckingham House) was also closed and the site chosen for its successor was 'about twenty miles further up, on a pretty island, to be safer from enemies'.³ Except for one reference to 'neighbours' Hallett, who was assisted by William Flett, made no mention of his North West Company competitor. The roof of Island House was covered with earth and grass on 24-25 October and chimneys were built and floors quickly laid so that, though unfinished, it could be occupied by 12 November when ice was driving 'very thick' in the Saskatchewan. The buildings remained unstockaded during the winter and it was not until the next season of open water that wood was obtained from upstream and prepared for erection. In March and April Hallett was visited by men from the Churchill dependency on Green Lake where supplies of pemmican were needed.⁴ Hallett's trade returns amounted to 1208 made beaver and those from Joseph Howse at Carlton House to 974.⁵ At Cumberland House during the winter of 1800-1 Tomison and his men suffered from lack of fresh meat because a fire during the previous summer had so devastated the country around that animals had to seek elsewhere for food, and to make matters worse, the fishing on which this post was so dependent, was unsuccessful. It was also a season troubled with opposition. Tomison's trade returns amounted to 2860 made beaver,⁶ bringing the North Saskatchewan River total up to 12,966 made beaver.

¹ P. 243 and n. 1.

² B.92/a/1, 23 and 25 September, 4 October 1800; *Supra*, p. lxxxiii.

³ L. R. Masson, editor, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1890), II, 23. But McDonald was in error in saying that the move was made in 1801.

⁴ B.92/a/1, *passim*.

⁵ B.239/d/123, fo. 28; B.49/a/30, fo. 18.

⁶ B.239/d/123, fo. 28.

The remaining Saskatchewan District post operated during season 1800–1 was that which Peter Fidler built at the junction of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer Rivers (near present-day Empress) and named Chesterfield House. He did not mention the origin of the name, but the post was either called after Chesterfield House at Blackheath in Kent where Richard Hulse¹ the Committee member lived, or more likely, after the market-town of Chesterfield in Fidler's native Derbyshire. As will be seen from Fidler's journal, he left Carlton House in company with James Bird on 15 August and parted from him at the mouth of the South Saskatchewan on the same day. The eighteen men who accompanied Fidler were all Orkneymen, but not one was mentioned by name in his official journal. Their identities have been discovered mainly from a scribbled list on the inside cover of his rough journal and from the 'Names of the Company's Servants' who were employed inland from York Factory in 1799–1800.² Nowhere has mention been made of the men having families with them, but Fidler was accompanied by his wife, his second son Charles, and perhaps by his eldest son Thomas.³ A third son, George, was to be born at Chesterfield House in the following November.⁴ Fidler does not appear to have been an obviously indulgent husband and father if his private purchases in London are any guide because they did not include the usual nuts, gingerbread, sugar-candy and such small luxuries which other officers ordered and no doubt reserved for special treats and family occasions.⁵ But he provided himself very well with the means to spend profitably any time he could take off from fur trading or hunting buffalo, for he undoubtedly took to Chesterfield House the instruments, nautical almanacs and books which had been sent to him by the ship of 1799 and on which he had spent no less than £30 out of his salary of £60 for season 1798–99.⁶

¹ P. xxi.

² B.34/a/1; *infra*, p. 269, n. 6.

³ In 1798 Fidler had requested Colen to write to the Company on his behalf for leave for his 'little Boy Tom' to go to England. B.239/b/66, fo. 46d. In 1799 Fidler's account was debited with £10 paid to George Sutherland 'for attention to his Son'. A.16/34, fo. 10. Sutherland returned to Europe in 1798. Permission for Tom to go to England was received (B.39/a/2, fo. 62d.) but he was certainly with his father in the summer of 1802. *Infra*, p. c.

⁴ P. 275, n. 5.

⁵ Seven pounds of green tea was all that was sent to him in 1799 which could be shared with his family. A.16/111, fo. 55d. Among Robert Goodwin's purchases sent to Albany Factory in 1799 at a cost of £1 2s. 6d. was a 'Twelfth [Night] Cake . . . Sugar'd, with Sweetmeats, Kings, Queens etc.'. *Ibid.*, fo. 54d.

⁶ A.16/34, fo. 10; A.16/111, fos. 55d., 59, 59d., 61d.–2. The books sent to Fidler in 1799 (in the order listed in London) were: 151 'Poets & Novels' at 6d. each; 33 'Hennes Eng.' costing 16s. 6d.; Goldsmith's *Grecian History* and his *Roman History* costing £1 12s. od.; Charles Hutton's *Mathematical and Philosophical Dictionary* (2 vols.) at £3 8s. od., his *Compendious Measurer* at 4s. 6d., and his *Diarian Miscellany* (?5 or 6 vols.) at £1 11s. 6d.; John Gay's *Fables* at 9s. od.; 'Guide to old age' at 4s. od.; Charles Vyse's *Arithmetic* (2 vols.) at 7s. od.; an abridged edition of Buffon's *Natural History* (2 vols.) at £1 4s. od.; Samuel Hearne's *Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* at

Thanks to the rough or draft version of the journal he kept from 6 August to 20 November,¹ and to a fuller version covering the period 15 August to 24 September² which he wrote some years later (both of which have been used in editing the text of the printed version), it is possible not only to follow his journey in greater detail to the junction of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer River, and during the building of Chesterfield House, but to enjoy his lively comments on the country through which he passed, its native inhabitants and its animal population.

Fidler, growing tired of waiting en route for his competitors to catch up so that they could travel in greater safety, pushed on and was the first to reach the new trading site on 25 September: three days later John Wills of the XY Company arrived and decided to build his post about one hundred yards to the west of Fidler's house. But when the North West Company trader, Pierre Belleau, arrived on 6 October he settled close enough to Fidler to share the same stockade: a partition between the rival houses inside the stockade ensured their separate identities. As Fidler explained in his official journal for the benefit of the London Committee, their close proximity was necessary if they were to render assistance to each other in the event of attack by Indians, but he omitted any reference to his neighbourliness extending to the loan of his tailor's services.³ The winter passed without undue incident and Fidler had the satisfaction of seeing his trade with Fall, Blackfoot and Blood Indians amount to 12,000 or so made beaver. The Chesterfield House cargo was by far the largest sent to London from York Factory in 1801⁴ and if figures did but exist it would be of interest to discover how it compared with the trade taken to Grand Portage by Belleau and Wills. Fidler's trade, obtained from the Plains Indians, was mostly in fox skins and it must have accounted for the unusually large number of these pelts, some 30,513, which were shipped from York Factory in 1801 and put up for sale in London on 10 March 1802.⁵ As there are no profit and loss accounts for individual posts the financial measure of his success cannot be gauged. Fidler reached Cumberland House with his furs on 25 May 1801 and on 7 June was left in charge there⁶ while Tomison went down to Gordon

£1 7s. 6d.; 18 *Monthly Reviews* for £1 14s. 6d.; Annual Register at 11s. 6d.; John Imison's *School of Arts* at 11s. 6d.; Samuel Vince's *Practical Astronomy* at 16s. 6d.; John Wilson's *Trigonometry* at 2s. 6d.; and Leadbeater's *Drawing* at 4s. 6d. See p. 276, n. 6.

¹ B.34/a/1.

² E.3/2, pp. 122-141.

³ P. 270, and p. 276, n. 4.

⁴ The remaining post and outpost in which Tomison was directly interested, Oxford House in charge of William Sinclair and Winni peggo shish in charge of James Halcrow, obtained joint returns of 3026 made beaver. B.239/d/123, fo. 28d.; B.156/a/3, *passim*.

⁵ P. 278; p. 279, n. 1; Appendix B.

⁶ B.49/a/30.

House with the Saskatchewan part of the London-bound cargo. With the Chesterfield House returns this part amounted to 24,966 made beaver.¹

XIII

Tomison had had six canoes built at Cumberland House in preparation for an expedition to Athabasca in the summer of 1801, but he had to abandon his plan because servants whose contracts were due for renewal refused to enter into new agreements except at increased wages. Tomison could not agree to their demands, however pressing his needs, without deliberately disobeying the Governor and Committee who, in their general letters to the Bay-side chiefs in 1799, had clearly stated that in the matter of wages they, the chiefs, had no discretionary powers. War conditions had not only forced up costs for trade goods and provisions, but had caused the prices of furs to decline, and the chiefs were told,

It is impossible for you to judge how much the Amount of our Aggregate Expences are. Servants Wages and Provisions are enormously heavy beyond your Conception and we are determined to lessen them by every means in our power at the same time not to loose sight of our Meritorious Servants.

Therefore Tomison had no option in the summer of 1801 but to send fifteen would-be bargainers down to the Bay-side en route for home. Ballanden, however, finding only twenty new recruits aboard the *King George* when she reached York Factory later that summer felt forced to come to terms with three of the men sent down by Tomison.² The next year, in an effort to keep a better control of the situation, the Committee instructed their Stromness agent to extend the contracted period of service from three to five years and ordered that no man under eighteen years of age be engaged.³

Tomison, after conducting a great deal of his summer business at

¹ The remaining made beaver returns shipped from York in 1801 were: 3026 from Oxford House (William Sinclair), 850 from Merry's House on 'Deep Water Lake' in the Bungee country (James Tate) and named by John Ballanden 'in Honour of one of my Honourable Masters', 3000 from Nelson River (W. H. Cook), 6766 from York Factory (John Ballanden), and 5200 from Severn (Thomas Thomas, senior). B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.; B.239/b/65, fos. 3d., 4; B.239/a/105, 26 May, 15th June, 1801.

² B.239/b/65, fos. 17, 21-21d.; A.6/16, p. 130; B.49/a/31, fos. 5-6, 8. John Paplay went with James Tate, John Ross 2nd to William Sinclair, and John Ballanden 2nd to W. H. Cook 'to send to Cross Lake'.

³ A.5/4, p. 159. There had been dismay at York Factory in 1797 when, on the arrival of the *King George*, it was found that there were several boys between the ages of 12 to 14 years among the new recruits. These boys had been engaged in Stromness by David Geddes, the Company's agent, on the same terms and for the same wages as men but were, of course, physically incapable of performing the heavy labour required from men. B.239/a/100, 25 August 1797.

Oxford House, returned inland. He had a difficult journey, particularly at Echimamish, where he found little or no water because the Indians had broken down all the locks he had made in the previous spring, but he at length reached Cumberland House, which was to be his headquarters during the coming winter, on 7 August.¹ Bird, after a brief visit to York Factory in June, was also on the Saskatchewan when the London dispatches dated 20 May (brought to Churchill Factory by the *King George*, Captain Henry Hanwell, and sent from there to York Factory), reached John Ballanden on 28 August.² Consequently Tomison did not receive the latest London news and instructions until the arrival of the fall packet. This reached Cumberland House from York Factory on 21 October, but long before then at least one item of news was already stale. As might be expected, the unofficial version was somewhat distorted but there was nevertheless truth in it. It concerned the dismissal of the former commander of the Hudson's Bay Company's ship *King George*, John Richards, who had admitted to smuggling furs 'contrary to the Duty' he owed his employers. He was discharged on 18 February 1801 and even if he had not needed to seek other employment his parting from the Company would soon have become known along the Thames, and to the London house of the North Westers, McTavish, Fraser & Company, whose office at 2 Suffolk Lane, Cannon Street, was but a very short walk from Hudson's Bay House. Richards had offered his services to the North West Company and it appears that until he was employed by that concern to take the *Eddystone* into James Bay in 1803, he was paid a retainer by John Fraser.³ Tomison learnt of the dismissal four days before reaching Cumberland House, his informants being the unidentified passengers in the 'light Canoe from Canada' which overtook his party. Obviously, the information had been sent from London to Montreal and had been received in time to be retailed at the annual meeting of the North Westers at Grand Portage. It must have upset Tomison, above all men, to learn the latest news of his employers' affairs in this fashion. And it was by no means the only instance of its kind that had occurred. Colen had written on 2 August 1797 in his York Factory journal of his astonishment at hearing

¹ B.49/a/31. See p. 123, 14 June 1798.

² The *Queen Charlotte* had been sold, no doubt for reasons of economy, and the *King George* carried supplies for both Churchill and York Factories. She reached Churchill on 16 August and York on 10 September 1801. A.1/48, fos. 37, 43d.; B.239/a/105, 28 August, 10 September 1801.

³ B.49/a/31, Tomison to Ballanden, Cumberland House, 9 August 1801; A.1/48, fo. 34; A.6/16, p. 227. John Fraser (of McTavish, Fraser & Co. of London) to Simon McTavish (of McTavish, Frobisher & Co. of Montreal) dated London, 6 August 1802, 'I'm rather surpris'd you never mention'd Capt. Richards. I understand from his Wife however, who apply'd to me to day for a little money over & above her allowance: that you mean to employ him, & on a scale that I really believe will answer a good purpose'. F.3/2, fo. 63d. See also *infra*, p. 49, n. 3; W. S. Wallace, 'The Nor'Westers Invade the Bay' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), March 1947, pp. 33-4.

that George Sutherland 'was acquainted of Mr Jarvis's appointment to York last Season, by Mr Shaw one of the Canadian proprietors; some time before he received any Letters or intelligence from York by the fall Canoes', and added that William Sinclair had received similar advance information from Canadians stationed either near Split Lake or on the Burntwood River, even though a packet had been sent to him immediately following the arrival of the ship at York Factory.¹

A fair amount has been written elsewhere about the less expensive means of transporting cargoes between London and the Indian countries of the North-west via Hudson Bay than by carrying them over the route which involved an Atlantic crossing followed by a long canoe-haul between Montreal and the distant fur-producing regions, and something has also been said about advantages possessed by the North Westers.² During the period under review these advantages included not only a much larger labour force recruited in Canada without hindrance from press-gangs and Government regulations, but also direct communication between the wintering partners and the Montreal-based partners and agents, McTavish, Frobisher & Co.³ This direct communication took place every summer at Grand Portage when every wintering partner who possibly could went there to meet the two agents who had left Montreal as soon as the rivers opened early in May. At Grand Portage events of the past winter as well as problems, such as rivalries between partners in adjoining districts, could be discussed in the presence of all in attendance. No speedy settlements of rival claims could be made or decisions on new projects involving expense be taken by the Hudson's Bay Company's salaried chiefs in the areas which later became known as the Northern and Southern Departments. The officers bringing down their fur-cargoes to Churchill, York and the James Bay depots could have no common meeting place on the Bay-side, not only because of the uncertainties of navigation by small vessels over long distances in ice-infested waters, but also because officers from inland could not afford to linger at the factories

¹ B.239/a/100. *Supra*, p. lvii.

² See Dr Richard Glover's remarks in his introduction to *H.B.R.S.*, XIV.

³ In turn, the Montreal agents were in regular communication, summer and winter, with their London house of McTavish, Fraser & Co. This firm was not only responsible for obtaining manufactured goods for the Indian trade, but also for putting on sale a high proportion of the pelts and allied produce obtained by the wintering partners. One such communication passing from McTavish, Fraser & Co. to McTavish, Frobisher & Co. on 20 December 1799 said, regarding the Hudson's Bay Company's fur sale held two days previously, 'We attempt over taking the vessel [since] we had the pleasure of writing you by the 14th Curr. to advise the fate of the Hudson Bay sale, which has gone extremely high, but you'll make allowance for their mode of sorting . . .'. The result of that sale could, and was no doubt, made known to the wintering partners assembled at Grand Portage in the summer of 1800, but the official account from the Hudson's Bay Company did not reach John Ballanden at York Factory until 8 September 1800. B.239/a/104; C.1/748.

on account of the need to arrive back at their forts (or houses, as the Hudson's Bay men seemed to prefer calling their posts) in advance of Canadian competitors. Furthermore, by delaying too long at the Bay-side they ran the risk of not reaching their houses before the onset of winter. But even if the Churchill, York and Severn officers had attempted to meet together in council in the spring or early summer, there was no one in authority to preside. And no advantage could be gained by waiting at the Bay-side until about the middle of August¹ for the arrival of the annual ship because members of the Board did not come either to preside at councils or to gain first-hand knowledge of life and trading practices in Rupert's Land. It was not surprising, therefore, that on their own confession the Governor and Committee 'had no sort of Clue' about the actual way in which the trade was conducted. The attempt made in 1796 to get more information by calling Edward Jarvis out of retirement and sending him to York Factory with special powers failed by reason of his disabilities and the cool reception he apparently met with on arrival. The annual fur trade meeting was one of the North West Company's practices which was adopted after the coalition of 1821 and in the Northern Department it was attended by the Chief Factors, no longer salaried employees but wintering partners, until 1869.² In normal times this council was presided over by the Governor of Rupert's Land (a resident and salaried employee enjoying the full confidence and support of the Governor and Committee) and during its existence there were two occasions only when one of 'their Honours' took the chair.³

Therefore, without one directing mind over the chiefs during the period under review, situations such as that which developed after both York and Churchill men had settled inland posts, were bound to happen. The problems of competition in the Rat River country, and whether

¹ The dates of arrival at York Factory for the period under review were: 27 August 1795, 20 August 1796, 24 August 1797, 6 September 1798, 30 August 1799, 8 September 1800, 10 September after reaching Churchill on 16 August 1801, and 26 August 1802. C.4/1.

² This was not, of course, the last occasion on which officers met to discuss fur trade business. Meetings under the presidency of the Company's Commissioner were held for many years after Rupert's Land became part of Canada.

³ Nicholas Garry, in 1821, presided at the meeting held at Norway House. He was chosen to go out from London to settle matters left outstanding after the signing of the coalition agreements because he was 'the only single Man in the Direction'. 'Diary of Nicholas Garry, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1822-1835. A Detailed Narrative of his travels in the Northwest Territories of British North America in 1821' in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (Ottawa, 1900), Vol. VI, Section II, p. 75. John Halkett presided at the 1822 temporary meeting held at York Factory. *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. III, E. E. Rich and R. Harvey Fleming, editors, *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1940, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), pp. 1, 11, 28, 38. The reference above is to the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land. The Council of the Southern Department of Rupert's Land which came into being at the same time met less frequently.

Churchill or York should directly benefit by gaining from the Canadians a share of the rich Athabasca trade, were almost impossible to solve so long as the strong-minded Stayner and that ill-teamed pair, Tomison and Colen, were directly responsible to London. Jealousy, obstruction and confusion, particularly in relation to the Athabasca project, continued because the causes could not be satisfactorily settled by correspondence, particularly by correspondence with Tomison. Although he could have left the summer inland business to be managed by James Bird, Tomison appears to have avoided being at York at ship-time. Replies to the Committee's letters received at York in August were signed by the chief and such council members as were present and sent to London by the returning ship. These replies were received by about the end of November following, but answers to any questions raised at the Bay-side could not be made until May of the next year, by which time circumstances and conditions had almost inevitably changed.¹

So far as Tomison was concerned the Athabasca problem was in abeyance in the fall of 1801 and the Governor and Committee about to learn of the men's refusal to go there because their demands for increased wages were not met. Meanwhile he had troubles enough at Cumberland House. When he received the London letter of that year he learnt that any friendly suggestions from the North Westers about making local trade agreements were to be received and settled with 'due observance of Peace & Harmony'; the Committee were sure that 'the superior quality' of the Hudson's Bay Company's trading goods would 'always command a preference with the Natives'.² But Tomison, opposed by both the Old and New Companies, complained on 19 January 1802, that these competitors were dogging the Indians and preventing them from hunting by keeping them well supplied with rum: he added with characteristic scorn, 'I cannot think of throwing goods away for nothing as two fools in a place are enough to be laughed at by Indians'.³

When summarising the difficulties he had experienced during season 1801-2 Tomison said that in the summer of 1801 the North West and XY Companies had brought in more than three hundred 'Eroquees or Mohawk Indians' on three-year contracts. These Indians, who left 'nothing wherever they Come', had swarmed over the Saskatchewan

¹ For a reason which need not be discussed here Stayner at Churchill incurred the Governor and Committee's anger in the autumn of 1799. In their letter to him of the following May (the earliest time they could write to him) he was severely taken to task. A.6/16, pp. 186-7. Stayner received this letter on 4 September 1800 and after stating his case in his reply of 9 September he remarked that to 'undertake a vindication . . . at so great a distance from home & at a lapse of time of one Twelve Month after the affair has happened will . . . be a difficult task'. B.42/b/44, fo. 74d.

² A.6/16, p. 224.

³ B.49/a/31.

District to complete the destruction of the beaver which had already been started several years back by the 'many Bungee Tawau Mischelemacana [and] Eroquee Indians' who had followed in the wake of the Canadians. The not unexpected result was a drop in Tomison's fur returns to 1657 made beaver¹ as compared with 2860 in the previous season.

The wandering Iroquois and free Frenchmen of whom Tomison complained must also have affected the Company's trade along the upper Saskatchewan during season 1801-2. Bird and Fidler left Cumberland House together on 14 August 1801 and en route, on Tomison's instructions, the former closed Carlton House because of the 'great waste of goods there' during the two preceding seasons.² Bird and Fidler parted company at the mouth of the South Branch. Lack of records makes it almost impossible to discover Bird's reaction to David Thompson's abortive attempt to cross the Rockies in June 1801³ or to find anything in detail about events on the upper Saskatchewan during the winter of 1801-2. The only sure facts are that the amounts of trade realised at the Company's posts of Island House where Henry Hallett was in charge, at Edmonton House and at Acton House were 1071, 1756 and 1368 made beaver respectively.⁴ Information gleaned by Fidler at the end of the season and noted in his rough journal was that the pemmican made at Island House amounted to 11 bags, at Edmonton House to 20 bags, and at Acton House to 40 bags. Also, that at the end of the season 'Acton House' was 'deserted by all the Sides' and Alexander Flet had left to join the North West Company.⁵

Fidler's official journal, supplemented by information from the rough version, gives a clear picture of the events, peaceful and disturbing, which took place along the South Branch during 1801-2. The North West Company did not return to the Chesterfield House area (a fact which must have confirmed Tomison in his opinion that its object in 1800 had been to divert its opponents' attention from Athabasca) and Fidler's only neighbour was the XY Company represented by John Wills. The enmity of the Fall Indians and the murders committed by them caused Fidler to find accommodation for Wills and his men so that as long as there was a threat of attack they could assist each other.

¹ *Ibid.*, Tomison to Ballanden, 6 June 1802; B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.

² B.49/a/31, 14 August 1801.

³ Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. lxxxvii.

⁴ B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.

⁵ B.39/a/2, 28 May 1802. See *infra*, p. 32, n. 3. Alexander Flet was 'a very active Trader and much regarded by Inland Officers'. He was getting £25 per annum. B.239/f/9, fo. 9. The North West Company agreed to pay him £60 per annum, to clothe him and his family and to provide 'all other Necessaries'

Fidler had his family with him and again the employees under his orders were all Orkneymen.¹ When the Indians were absent from the post he had time to follow his own pursuits: he drew maps of the journeys he had made in earlier years², and for leisure reading he must have had the books which had been bought on his account and sent out from London by the ship of 1800.³ The alarms and worries of the season, as might be expected, affected the Indian trade and, at the end of the season, he took away only 7495 made beaver⁴ as compared with 12,000 in the previous year. No comparison can be made with the trade obtained by John Wills for although the rival traders shared the same post for part of the season Fidler made no mention of an estimate of his opponent's total. Of the Saskatchewan posts Fidler's decreased trade was still the best result for 1801-2. Hudson's Bay and XY Company men left, or more properly abandoned, Chesterfield House on 21 April and for a few days kept close together. There proved to be no danger from Indians and on 21 May Fidler paused to pay a brief visit to Mr Belleau at his fort, which was about a day's journey from the mouth of the South Branch. Fidler waited at the mouth of the South Branch for the brigade from the upper Saskatchewan. Headed by James Bird this brigade, consisting of three boats and six canoes, arrived on 28 May. The news he then received caused Fidler to comment in his rough journal, 'This is the smallest Trade that has been Inland these 20 Years past'.⁵ The general letter of 1802 from John Ballanden and the council at York to the Governor and Committee made no mention of the roving Iroquois, but said that Tomison and Bird blamed the drop in fur returns to 'the natural consequences of a degree of Cold unknown in those parts and which raged with unremitting violence thro' the whole of last winter' and added,

So severe was this season of distress as to expose some poor Indian families to all the miseries attendant upon Cold & hunger a Universal scarcity of Buffaloe and Animals of fur kind prevailed in every

¹ P. 294, n. 1.

² P. 317, n. 4.

³ Costing nearly £8 they included: one on surgery, one on wounds, one on geography, one on ancient and modern geography and history, one on astronomy, some solar and lunar tables, the *Annual Register* for 1799, a *History of Jews* (sixty parts to be bound in one volume) and a *History of the Bible* (also in sixty parts to be bound in one volume). A.16/111, fo. 67-67d.; A.16/34, fo. 10.

⁴ B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.

⁵ B.39/a/2. The Saskatchewan returns totalled 13,347 made beaver. To this figure should be added: 2400 from Oxford House (William Sinclair), 1200 from Merry's House (James Tate), 4000 from Nelson River (W. H. Cook), 8390 from York Factory (John Ballanden), and 5000 from Severn (Thomas Thomas, senior) to make up the 34,337 made beaver sent from York Factory to London in 1802. B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.

quarter and many of the Beavr. that were killed by the Indians were singled to satisfy the pressing demands of nature.¹

XIV

During the period under review the fur returns brought to York Factory from Cumberland House and the posts beyond as far as the Rockies (an area referred to by all Hudson's Bay Company employees as 'The Saskatchewan' or 'the Saskatchewan District'), as well as those brought from other parts of Rupert's Land, will be found referred to in terms of made beaver.² This had been the Company's book-keeping practice from the earliest times. At no period during the years 1795 to 1802 inclusive has it been possible to find exactly how many skins of a given kind were traded at Edmonton House or elsewhere in the Saskatchewan District, or the prices obtained for them in the London market. It is only from 1799 that the totals of the cargoes shipped from York Factory and the other Bay-side depots are known in numbers of skins as well as in made beaver.³

The returning supply-ship carrying the furs usually left York Factory for London in the early part of September, but her arrival and those of the ships from Churchill and James Bay, were delayed to about the end of November during the war years by having to wait in Stromness Harbour for naval escort to the Thames. When the vessels reached port the Company's warehouse once again came to life and seasonal workers, varying from seven to fourteen in number, were employed not only to help in the sorting and preparation of the furs, but also in the packing of goods and provisions for shipment to the Bay-side depots in the following June.⁴

As from 1795 the first consideration, once the cargo totals were known, was to prepare for printing the lists of the quantities of furs, skins, feathers, etc. to be exposed for sale. The information in these lists was of interest to some fifty or so merchants, many of whose names suggest a

¹ B.239/b/79, fo. 39.

² For the trade returns from York Factory and inland, 1796-1802, see p. 325. The Severn River returns were taken to York by the small vessel based on Severn.

³ For the cargo list of 1801 when Fidler sent 12,000 made beaver to York Factory from Chesterfield House, see p. 326, and for the 1801 York Factory totals of each variety of skin in numbers as well as in made beaver, see p. 327.

⁴ West, the permanent porter, had a weekly wage of 18s. *od.*; the seasonal workers, employed from one to seven days a week as required, received 2s. 6d. per day. In 1801 the Committee raised the wages of the seasonal workers from 15s. *od.* to 18s. *od.* per week to meet the higher cost of living caused by the war and bad harvests. A.57/1, fos. 12-18; A.1/48, fo. 30; T. H. Baker, *Records of the Seasons, Prices of Agricultural Produce and Phenomena Observed in the British Isles* (London, 1883), p. 235.

Continental origin, and whose addresses were mostly in, or on the periphery of, the square mile of the City of London. Dates were set for forthcoming auctions, usually three, and catalogues were printed.¹ As a rule it was soon after the result of the last sale was known that the Governor and Committee declared the annual dividend.² Following La Pérouse's destruction of York and Churchill Forts in 1782 no dividends were paid during the next three years, but they were resumed, though at a lower rate, in 1786. After some fluctuation payment was made at six per cent. in 1795 and it continued at that rate until 1800. Expenses inevitably increased as the war dragged on, and when the rate dropped to four per cent. in 1801 (at which it was to remain for several years) the Committee told one enquiring shareholder that it had invariably been their rule 'to Divide to the utmost amongst the Proprietors', but now the 'enormous price' of the large quantity of necessary provisions for the men in the Bay, plus the extra costs for merchandise 'rendered a diminution of the Dividend necessary'.³

As well as being expensive, provisions and trading goods were difficult to obtain under war conditions. There was no French brandy to be had and rum was not altogether acceptable as a substitute.⁴ The situation was aggravated in 1796 when, following a series of bad harvests, it became necessary for Parliament to place a temporary ban on the distillation of spirits not only from grain but also from molasses, sugar and potatoes.⁵ And in the winter of 1799-1800 the hopes of getting Brazil tobacco were so slender that Tomison and William Bolland from Eastmain Factory, then both in London, supervised the making of 'Spencers Twist' to resemble in colour, size, quality and flavour the Brazil tobacco which the Indians so much preferred. But this processing doubled the cost of the tobacco and requests for economy in its expenditure inevitably followed.⁶

Besides the usual war-time need to get embargoes taken off ships, to make convoy arrangements for their outward and homeward passages, and to secure seamen and servants from impressment into the armed forces, it was necessary for the Company in the early months of 1798 to obtain leave from the Privy Council to export gunpowder and arms, and

¹ A.1/47, fo. 66d. for example, and A.57/1 inside back cover. No catalogues for this period have survived in the Company's archives.

² For amounts realised on the cargoes of 1795-1802 inclusive, see Appendix D.

³ A.1/47, fos. 54, 71d., 90, 113d., 130; A.1/48, fos. 20d., 44d., 66d., 86; A.5/4, pp. 144-5. See Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company A History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, revised edition 1949), pp. 339-44.

⁴ A.6/15, fo. 40.

⁵ P. 70, n. 3.

⁶ A.6/16, pp. 183, 184. As it happened, fifteen rolls of Brazil tobacco ordered in 1798 unexpectedly arrived from Lisbon just in time to be sent to Hudson Bay in 1800.

from the Board of Trade to export provisions.¹ Also, with the representatives of thirteen other 'Merchants of the City of London', the Company's secretary obeyed a summons to Downing Street to hear Pitt's proposals for imposing a duty on imports and exports.² In the talks which followed, however, the Hudson's Bay Company's 'peculiar Circumstances', like those of the East India Company, were taken into account and both secured exemption under the Act which came into force on 5 July.³ But as the war continued difficulties increased. In the spring of 1801 the Hudson's Bay Company's first petition to the King in Council for a licence to export to its factories such necessities as salted provisions, butter, cheese etc. was refused, and it was only after submitting a second application specifying lesser quantities, and after the secretary had been interrogated about the urgent need to send such provisions to Hudson Bay, that a licence was granted.⁴

Prospects appeared brighter following the declaration of a general armistice on 12 October and the signing of the Peace of Amiens on 27 March 1802, but the hopes of the Board (from which Richard Hulse had retired and to which Joseph Berens, junior,⁵ had been elected in November 1801) that the restraints on their trade caused by high prices would be gradually eased were to meet with disappointment. About two weeks before their ships sailed for the Bay in 1803 Britain was again at war with France.

XV

Colen used his official journals to convey to the Governor and Committee opinions or ideas which he did not want known by the council at York Factory, but the Saskatchewan District journals of Tomison and others printed herein conform to rules laid down by the Board. For that reason, apart from any deficiencies on the part of the authors, much

¹ A.1/47, fo. 111d.

² A.1/47, fos. 106d., 108d., 109.

³ Geo. III, Cap. LXXVI, 'An Act for the better Protection of the Trade of this Kingdom; and for granting new and additional Duties of Customs on Goods imported and exported, and on the Tonnage of certain Ships entering Outwards or Inwards to or from Foreign Parts, until the signing the preliminary Articles of Peace', clauses 6 and 24.

⁴ A.1/48, fo. 40d.; A.6/16, pp. 200, 208, 215, etc.

⁵ Joseph Berens, junior, was the eldest son of Joseph Berens, senior (p. xxii), and a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford. He was admitted to the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn in 1795, and wrote (A.5/5, p. 73) in 1811 of the summer assizes, 'where my own legal Occupations has left no leisure, to attend to other Business'. *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn*, Vol. I, Admissions from A.D. 1420 to A.D. 1799 (Lincoln's Inn, 1896), p. 553. Joseph Berens, junior, acquired £1800 stock from his father two weeks before the General Court of 25 November 1801 when he was elected to a seat on the Committee. He served as Deputy Governor from 1807-12; Governor 1812-22; and on the Committee 1822-33. He died on 11 January 1853. There is a silhouette of 'Jos. Berens Junr. 1802 Deputy Govr. Hudson Bay Coy.' in the Beaver House picture collection.

information likely to be of great interest to the historian is lacking. To some extent these omissions have been repaired by drawing on so-called 'rough' versions of Fidler's journals as well as on his edited journals of surveys or explorations.¹ These sources often provide not only fuller details about day-to-day events, but also information of all kinds about the country he traversed. He was deeply interested in the Indians and their customs and 'collected together in another Book', now unfortunately missing, all the information he could about them and their 'different & quite distinct languages'.² It must have been for use in this particular book that he entered in his rough Chesterfield House journal for 1800 the Indian vocabulary which includes 'Nin nen ne — fat man or what the Fall Inds. calls Mr Tomison'.³ Fidler, like other masters of posts, kept a record of activities during working hours, but again like them, omitted almost everything that sheds light on leisure pursuits.

Most of the labourers along the Saskatchewan River came from the Orkney Islands and although some could read and write, in the main they lacked education, and for that reason their reading (or listening) was probably limited to the newspapers sent from England and the Orkneys or borrowed from the North Westers. The Orkneyman's more active pastimes, excluding hunting, must have been those familiar to the people at home and in season undoubtedly included the rough and tumble kind of football played at Kirkwall each New Year's Day.⁴ For entertainment there may have been a piper among the employees, but all that is definitely known is that in July 1797 Colen offered George Sutherland the services of an unidentified labourer or tradesman who was also a piper.⁵

There was social intercourse with the North Westers, though it was probably very limited where Tomison was in command, but scarcely any reference to it is to be found in the post journals. Mention has already been made of Tomison entertaining the North Westers who helped to extinguish the fire at Buckingham House in March 1795.⁶ There was no doubt some fraternisation on occasions such as St Andrew's Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, though Duncan McGillivray did not mention any taking place during 1794-95. Nor did he say if Tomison and his men were present, either as competitors or spectators, at the horse-racing indulged in at Fort George just before the North West Company's brigade left for Grand Portage in May 1795.⁷

¹ E.g. notes on p. 254 *et seq.*

² E.3/2, p. 34.

³ B.34/a/1, fo. 16d.

⁴ P. 78, and n. 2.

⁵ B.239/b/66, fo. 3.

⁶ P. xxvi.

⁷ Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan McGillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1929), p. 78. Tomison's Buckingham House journal for the same season is missing. At York Factory, where Joseph Colen had no Canadian neighbours, Guy Fawkes Day (5 November), Christmas (24-28 December), New Year (31 December-1 January), and St George's Day (23 April) were celebrated during season 1795-96. B.239/a/99.

The young clerks or writers, described by Colen as 'petty Officers come from England',¹ probably obtained entry into the Company's employ through relatives or friends already in the service² or by being recommended to Committee members.³ These young men had received varying degrees of education and the pleasures of reading were theirs if they were so inclined, but the time was still far distant when the Governor and Committee would provide 'Post Libraries'; those wanting books had to spend their own money. Nothing is known about the contents of parcels sent to York Factory by the relatives or friends of Company employees, but the book of 'Servants Commissions' for 1787-1802⁴ makes known those who provided themselves with the means to follow their individual interests. The choice made by such men as David Thompson, Peter Fidler and Malchom Ross included many surveying instruments to add to those provided by the Company, *Nautical Almanacs*, necessary text books, and reading matter for pleasure. Mention has already been made of the books Fidler is thought to have taken with him to Chesterfield House;⁵ his earlier purchases included the *Mysteries of Adolphus(sic)* and Harrison's *British Classics*.⁶ James Bird acquired a violin about 1795 and some three years later added an *Ancient Universal History* in twenty-one volumes as well as *Pleasures of the Imagination* by Ackinside (Akenside) to his personal library. Again, in 1799, the supply-ship brought him 'Tasso *Jarusalem* 2 volumes ...; Popes *Select Poems* 1 vol. ...; Rowes [trans.] *Lucans Pharsalia* 2 vol. ...; Lewis's [trans.] *Thebaid of Statius* 2 vol. ...; [Roger's] *Pleasures of Memory* 1 vol. ...' costing £2 9s. od.⁷ For lighter moments David Thompson's many purchases included Milton's *Paradise Lost*, several volumes of Dr Johnson's *Rambler*, Blair's *Belles Lettres* and Hooper's *Recreations*.⁸

Unlike Colen, whose interests were wide and who consequently kept the secretary busy with the commissions he sent to London each year,⁹

¹ B.239/a/96, 11 June 1794.

² E.g. Henry Hallett was a nephew of Philip Turnor and Thomas Colen was a nephew of Joseph Colen. It is likely that Joseph Howse, who came from Cirencester, was recommended by Joseph Colen or his relatives.

³ E.g. John Peter Pruden may have been brought to the notice of the Lake family.

⁴ A.16/111. The greater part of the commissions, which came from all over Rupert's Land, were concerned with the repair of metal and silver watches, but some were for clothing, including children's hats, and for miscellaneous items such as bird seed, a flute, violins, spectacles, fireworks, a magic lantern, gingerbread, and comfits.

⁵ P. lxxxv, n. 6; p. xciii, n. 3.

⁶ A.16/111, fos. 25, 39d. *Infra*, p. 46, n. 1. Mrs Ann Radcliffe's 'Gothic' romance, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, first published in four volumes in 1794, was sent to Fidler by the ship of 1795. 'But now, really, do not you think Udolpho the nicest book in the world?' enquires the heroine of the hero in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (written during 1798 and first published in 1818).

⁷ A.16/111, fos. 26d., 48, 55d.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fos. 18, 23, 26d.; obtained from London 1792-95.

⁹ When Colen finally left Hudson Bay in 1798 he claimed to have disposed of to his successor

Tomison was obviously no great reader of books for his requests for them were few. In fact Tomison's personal requests of any kind were limited. He did, however, acquire six volumes of *Evenings at Home* in 1797, issues of the *Oeconomist* for one year in 1798, and *The Monthly Magazine and British Register* for May 1797 to April 1798.¹ The last-named publication started in 1796 and it is likely that Tomison took the issues for 1796-1797 with him on his return to Edmonton House from Britain in 1797, but what he read at Edmonton House during the first year of its existence is not known. George Sutherland does not appear to have bought any books.

References to families or family life are very limited both in the records sent to London and those retained in Rupert's Land. The Governor and Committee only became actively aware of the existence of particular children when requested for permission to send or to bring one, always a boy, home for the benefit of education, or when the father, having returned to Britain, made arrangements for clothing the family he had left behind.² For the most part the existence of the mothers was ignored. But in 1802, when the Governor and Committee complained to the York Factory council about the absence of accounts showing the amounts of goods supplied to 'superior Servants' and questioned, 'How is this? Have they not most of them Wives & Children who are all cloathed by the Company's Goods?',³ they received the prompt reply:

we wish to remark that the women are deserving of some encouragement and indulgence from your Honors, they clean and put into a state of preservation all Beavr. and Otter skins brought by the Indians undried and in bad Condition. They prepare Line for Snow shoes and knit them also without which your Honors servants could not give efficient opposition to the Canadian traders they

certain private property which included such diverse items as 21 prints, a concave looking glass, a barometer, 'Excise & Tax Tables', 6 barrel organs (worth £18), 3 goats, 13 store pigs and 6 sows. He also left behind a private library of about 1400 books to be sent to England at a later date. A.5/4, pp. 76-7.

¹ A.16/111, fos. 42, 46. His account does not suggest that he had a wife or family. But to whom was John Ballanden referring on 7 February 1801 when he wrote in the York Factory journal, 'Examined the Indian Lad that came Yesterday (and who is the Son of an Officer that holds a very high Station in Your Honours Service) He informs me that the Indians he has been residing with ever since the Fall, has all along experienced great want . . . ?' B.239/a/105.

² B.239/b/79, fo. 28d., Tomison and the York Factory council to the Governor and Committee, September 1799, '... Mr Cockings request of £6 to each Child being more than rearly necessary for the Articles of Cloathing only, it is Humbly wished that through your Honours Goodness a part of this Annuity could be laid out in Ginger Bread, Nuts &c as they have no other means of obtaining those little Luxuries, with which the paternal fondness of a Father formally provided them'.

³ A.6/16, p. 246 *et seq.*

make Leather shoes for the men who are obliged to travel about in search of Indians and furs and are usefull in a variety of other instances, in short they are Virtually your Honors Servants and as such we hope you will Consider them.¹

XVI

Fidler's wife, who had undoubtedly carried out her share of the women's duties at Chesterfield House, was to do similar work during trading season 1802-3 and in succeeding years at Nottingham House on Lake Athabasca. On his return from the South Branch to Cumberland House in 1802 Fidler found that at last arrangements were in hand for an expedition to the northward. He was to lead it, but first he had to take his family down to York Factory. There the two younger boys were left with their Indian relatives and the 'Eldest Boy Tom' placed in the care of Thomas Colen 'to learn . . . his lessons &c.'. After a stay of only three days at the Bay-side Fidler and his wife turned back inland on 26 June en route to Lake Athabasca via Cumberland House.² By promising increased wages and limiting their contracts to one year Tomison had, with much difficulty, found sixteen men willing to accompany Fidler and Thomas Swain.³ But the odds against making a profitable trade were greater than they had been when Ross and Thompson were telling Colen that Tomison would prevent Cumberland House from becoming the point of departure for Athabasca. Since that time the North West Company had lost some of its Athabasca trade to the New North Westers and was determined to prevent the Hudson's Bay Company from also getting a share. Opposition stiffened further after the union of the Old and New North Westers in 1804 and two years later Peter Fidler was forced to abandon his efforts.

By the time of Fidler's retreat from Athabasca Tomison, who had gone home to Orkney in 1803, was on his way back to Hudson Bay having found that he did not care for retirement.⁴ But he would not be

¹ B.239/b/79, fos. 40d.-41.

² B.39/a/2; B.239/a/106. Their daughter Sally (See lee ah, B.39/a/2, fo. 39) was born at Nottingham House on 26 November 1802. Sally's name appears in the list of Fidler's children on p. 12 of his 'Note Book' which is preserved in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The Society is indebted to Mr Hartwell Bowsfield, Provincial Archivist, for the loan of a photocopy of this 'Note Book'.

³ The steersmen were allowed £25, bowsmen £20 and middlemen £16. B.39/a/2, 7 August 1802; B.39/b/72, fo. 20; A.5/4, p. 274.

⁴ For an outline of the remainder of Tomison's remarkable career see, J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 590-1. Tomison's disposition was apparently no happier after he finally retired to South Ronaldsay in 1811. He died on 26 March 1829 and on 1 April was buried 'in a clay cold corner of his kale yard - because he had seen

returning to the Saskatchewan; the problems in that area were for his successor there, James Bird, to face.

The criticism expressed by George Sutherland and Malchom Ross in 1798 that Tomison for twenty years or more had merely followed the North Westers up the Saskatchewan River was true enough, but the accusation that he had no inclination to open up new territory cannot be satisfactorily proved.¹ The inland trade was Tomison's responsibility and the measure of its success, besides being reflected in the Company's profits, could be found in the amount of remuneration he received each year above his basic salary. Tomison had a reputation for accumulating money and so had incentive enough to expand the Company's trade, but during the period with which this volume is particularly concerned he lacked sufficient means in men and goods to be sure of even a modest success in Athabasca. His resources were always fewer than those of the North Westers. With his restricted means Tomison undoubtedly preferred to maintain his trade with the Indian tribes who came to the posts along the Saskatchewan rather than risk losses by sending undermanned and inadequately equipped expeditions into the area which the North West Company was determined to keep for its own preserve as long as possible.

Had the period following the return of Turnor and Ross from Athabasca in 1792 not coincided with the war years there would not have been recruitment problems in the Orkneys, and neither Tomison nor Colen would have met with so much resistance when trying to persuade inland servants to go to Athabasca. Given sufficient men as well as adequate provisions and trading goods Tomison, self interest apart, could hardly have pursued any other course but to allow Cumberland House to be the starting point for the York inland expeditions to Athabasca. By the use of this well-established route, even though it took a course so far to the south of York Factory, there would have been no immediate necessity to find an alternative one by way of the Nelson and Churchill Rivers. The useless competition with the resulting disagreements between York and Churchill might then have been lessened if not altogether avoided.

But the Company's records make it abundantly clear that after the outbreak of war the Governor and Committee were sometimes unable to meet even normal demands, especially for labour. Not surprisingly all servants, particularly when contracts were due for renewal, demanded

a swine in the churchyard'. See Ernest W. Marwick, 'William Tomison Pioneer of the Fur Trade' in *Alberta Historical Review* (1962), X, 8.

¹ Pp. xlviii, xlix.

higher wages than usually allowed. Some demands were met, but extravagant ones were refused and in most instances the dissatisfied men were sent home as ordered by the Board. The employment of Canadians as a solution to the labour shortage was considered but not seriously pursued. This is no reflection on the Canadian voyageur whose part in the opening of the Canadian West is a recognised historical fact. The Orkneyman, a less picturesque figure, has yet to receive full acknowledgment for his contribution. One drawback to the recruitment of Canadians was that any choosing to enlist in the Hudson's Bay Company would have to accept lower wages than fellow-countrymen serving in similar capacities in the North West Company. But the plain truth is that Orkneymen, on whom the Hudson's Bay Company was so dependent, were unwilling to work with Canadians or Englishmen, though they were obliged to accept orders from English officers.¹ Colen and others (including the usually uncomplaining Peter Fidler) blamed Tomison for not maintaining stricter discipline among the servants, but how far their criticism was justified is hard to say. Apart from any sympathy Tomison obviously felt for the class of men from which he himself had sprung, he probably faced the fact that during times of acute labour shortage concessions have not only to be made in terms of money. The extravagant rates demanded by servants only willing to go to Athabasca on their own terms were obviously considered by them as compensation for the heavy toil of the journey and a diet of fish. This last was a particularly unattractive prospect for men accustomed to working along the upper Saskatchewan where fresh buffalo meat from what Bird called 'the agreeable plains'² was, except under very unfavourable weather conditions, usually obtainable in plenty.

It is useless to speculate what might have happened if Tomison and Colen had been on better terms and, in spite of all difficulties, had managed to work for and obtain a foothold in Athabasca. As events turned out, the Hudson's Bay Company's Athabasca campaign was not launched in strength until a number of years after Fidler's withdrawal in 1806 and, except for Joseph Howse's expedition of 1810-11 into present-day Montana, its brigades were not to pass along the Saskatchewan en route to the Pacific coast until after union with its rival in 1821.

¹ A.11/117, fos. 116, 118; A.6/15, pp. 19-20. When trying to engage Canadians or Americans such as Joseph Lewis (p. 200, n. 1) and his companions wage rates had to be carefully considered in order to avoid discontent among Orkney servants. In 1795 the rates offered Lewis and his unwilling companions were 480 livres or £20 per annum for steersmen and 384 livres or £16 per annum for others. George Sutherland remarked that the Canadian traders paid 600 to 1000 livres but any accepting the Hudson's Bay Company's terms would find that 'they can save more in our Service in one Year than they can in three in the Canadians . . .'. B.27/a/1, fos. 24-25.

² P. 211.

EDMONTON HOUSE JOURNALS
1795-1800

JOURNAL OF WILLIAM TOMISON

1795-1796

A Diary of Occurrences Commencing July 28th Ending August 11th Inclusive By Mr William Tomison chief inland for the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company.

1795

*July 28, Tuesday.*¹ Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. At 7 a.m. embarked five canoes for York Factory under the care of Mr Oman² loaded with eighty-four bundles of furs and 820 lbs. of pemmican for their journey down. Two men mending a net, one of the young hands lame in both his feet by cuts and bruises, and the other two putting their hatchets in order. At 6 a.m. an Indian arrived, brought the flesh of a moose deer of which the men going down took as much as they wanted of it. Three sturgeon from the nets today. Also in the evening an Indian arrived with a little dried provisions.

July 29, Wednesday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear hot weather. One man mending a net, one man lame and the rest collecting firewood. Traded 200 lbs. of pounded meat, and 60 lbs. of very poor dried meat but not an ounce of fat. At noon the Indian went away.

July 30, Thursday. Wind SW a fresh breeze and thundered much with a shower of rain at noon. One man working a net, two men attending the nets, caught four sturgeon; and the rest with myself opening ten packages, the contents of which were not specified in the invoice, we repacked most of them again. The above packages it seems laid in the house at the Rock³ all winter, by Hugh Sebbeston⁴ breaking his canoe and the packages got

¹ The journal opens at Cumberland House where Tomison had arrived on 5 June 1795 after wintering at Buckingham House. Hudson's Bay Company Archives B.49/a/26. Subsequent classification numbers refer to Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

² Mitchell Oman, an Orkneyman, who had joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer in 1771. David Thompson wrote of him, 'He had no education, but a fine looking manly powerful man of tenacious memory and high moral qualities, and much respected by the Indians and whose language he had acquired'. Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. 38, and p. 235, n. 1. For a biographical note, see J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 237, n. 1.

³ Gordon House, 'a Store House' for lodging goods 'for the use of the Inland Settlements', was established by Joseph Colen in the summer of 1794 'near the Rock in Hill River'. B.239/b/58, fos. 65d., 61. Present-day Hayes River from Swampy Lake as far as its junction with Fox River was formerly known as Hill River. See *infra*, p. 47, n. 5.

⁴ Hugh or Howee Sebbeston, whose 'parish' is shown as 'Hudsons Bay' in the list of York Inland Servants for 1795-96, was then about 24 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 37.

wet, by which some of the articles have got totally damaged by the rusty iron work, cotton shirts especially and oval iron boxes.

July 31, Friday. Wind as yesterday with sultry hot weather, no working without doors for mosquitoes, one man mending a net. The rest digging a cellar, it being at present nothing but a dirty hole.

August 1, Saturday. Wind variable from SE to NW a fresh breeze with thunder lightning and rain at times. One man mending a net and the rest collecting firewood.

August 2, Sunday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with clear hot weather. Two sturgeon from the nets today.

August 3, Monday. Wind westerly a strong breeze with clear weather. One man working a net and the rest digging a cellar. One small sturgeon from the nets today.

August 4, Tuesday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with heavy showers of rain. Towards evening two men took up the nets and set two more, caught two small sturgeon; the rest collecting wood for logging the cellar.

August 5, Wednesday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. One man working a net the rest working in the cellar. Two small sturgeon from the nets. In the afternoon two families of Indians arrived brought nothing.

August 6, Thursday. Wind northerly gentle breezes with clear hot weather. One man working a net, two sturgeon from them today; one man lame, the rest with myself framing the logs of the cellar. Gave the Indians ammunition and sent them hunting.

August 7, Friday. Wind SW a fresh with clear hot weather. Three men mending and setting nets, also took the others up to be repaired, the rest with myself at work in the cellar.

August 8, Saturday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. Two men mending nets, the rest with myself finished the cellar. Three sturgeon from the nets today. One family of Indians arrived, brought nothing.

August 9, Sunday. Light airs northerly. Thundered very much with lightning and rain. The Indians went away that came yesterday. Three sturgeon from the nets.

August 10, Monday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze with hot weather. Sent two men to set nets where they set them in winter, and the rest cleaning a parcel of old kegs that were in the cellar, some of which was rotten and become useless. At 1 p.m. seven Michele-maccana Indians¹

¹ Indians from the Michilimackinac (Mackinac) area. Presumably the Potawatomi ('people of the place of fire') a tribe or group of the Ojibwa (Chippewa) from the west side of Lake Huron within the present state of Michigan. Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, 1932), p. 277.

arrived in a canoe, well-armed: these with many more came to the Red River¹ last autumn with the New Company of adventurers² which brought in sixteen canoes well loaded and have only loaded six very lightly of furs out. One canoe they have sent up Saskachewen loaded with twelve bales of dry goods. The above Indians have come for a supply of ammunition in credit which I am very unwilling to give them.

August 11, Tuesday. Wind easterly fresh breezes with clear hot weather. The men clearing ground for the foundation of a house. Gave the Indians a little credit and they went away. At 2 p.m. a young Indian arrived, brought a few beaver and thirty pounds of half-dried moose flesh.

August 12, Wednesday. Wind ESE a fresh gale with clear weather. Five men falling stuff for a watch house on the NE quarter to face the gate. At noon the fishermen came home but have caught nothing. This morning a boy about ten years of age arrived, brought the disagreeable news that the young man that was with him had upset the canoe and was drowned in the little river below; the boy caught hold of the canoe and was drove on shore, he came here by land.

August 13, Thursday. Wind in the south quarter a fresh breeze with hazy hot weather. Two men brought home the nets but no fish, the rest employed as yesterday; in the evening set three nets.

August 14, Friday. Wind variable fresh gales with cloudy weather. One man mending a net and the rest carrying in stockades. Three sturgeon from the nets. At 7 a.m. the Indians arrived, that the young man belonged to, that was drowned, they lament him much as he was their only support.

August 15, Saturday. Wind ESE a gentle breeze with hot weather. One man repairing a net and the rest shaving stockades. Four small sturgeon from the nets.

¹ This may mean the Red River, but here it is more likely a reference to the Assiniboine, formerly known as the Upper Red River. See A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (London, [1939]), p. 345.

² That is, new opposition to both the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies. Formerly, Montreal-based Canadian traders had operated a flourishing business from Michilimackinac into the Illinois country and beyond. Under the Treaty of Versailles (1783), following the loss of the American colonies, British fur traders had been able to continue operations in the south-west and although the Jay Treaty of 1794 (which settled the boundary) made concessions to British traders, it also foreshadowed the necessity of their deciding whether to continue operating to the south-west as American citizens or turning their attentions to the north-west. Of the Montreal firms supplying and outfitting traders to the south-west, Forsyth, Richardson & Co. was one which transferred its interests to the north-west, and William Grant and Etienne Campion of Grant, Campion & Co. were two of the experienced Michilimackinac traders who also became suppliers to winter traders to the north-west. See H[udson's] B[ay] R[ecord] S[ociety], Vol. XXII, E. E. Rich, *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1959), II, 186-202; R. Harvey Fleming, 'The Origin of "Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company"' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1928), Vol. IX, p. 141.

August 16, Sunday. Wind as yesterday a fresh breeze with cloudy hazy weather. Four sturgeon from the nets.

August 17, Monday. Wind variable all round fresh breezes weather as yesterday. Two men working at the net work, the rest shaving stockades; set two nets and took up one. No fish today.

August 18, Tuesday. Wind NW a stiff gale with cloudy weather, the men employed as yesterday. Caught four sturgeon, brought the nets home to be repaired.

August 19, Wednesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. Two men employed at the nets caught a few small fish. Sent James Swain¹ with the rest to look for the body of the drowned Indian. Seven canoes of Bungees² arrived and they say more will arrive tomorrow. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 p.m. James Swain returned and those with him, having found the drowned person and buried him.

August 20, Thursday. Wind variable in the east quarter fresh breezes with thunder and rain in the morning. Four men employed at the nets and the rest shaving stockades. At 2 p.m. three canoes of Maccana Indians³ and sixteen canoes from other quarters.

August 21, Friday. Wind NE a strong gale with cloudy weather, and rained much in the night. One man net making, two also overhauling, the others caught three small sturgeon, the rest employed digging a trench.

August 22, Saturday. Wind variable fresh breezes with cloudy weather. One man net mending and James Swain and myself trading a little provisions from the Indians that came on Thursday for liquor.

August 23, Sunday. Wind SE a moderate breeze weather part cloudy

¹ James Swain came from the parish of St Andrew's, London, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a writer in 1791 at £15 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 38. At the end of season 1795-96 Tomison intended sending James Swain back to England as 'unfit for the Company's service', but apparently relented and sent him to Severn Factory. B.239/a/99, 11 August 1796; B.198/a/55, *passim*. In 1815, when master of Severn House, he was described as a dark complexioned man, aged 40, and 5 feet 10 inches tall. It was also then reported of him: 'Exceedingly regular & diligent in business, qualified to command where strict discipline is required, has considerable Abilities as a Trader & a general knowledge of the business of the Country'. A.30/14, fo. 4. James Swain was an elder brother of the Thomas Swain (referred to on p. 125, n. 2), who joined the Company as a writer in 1793. A.5/3, p. 200.

² Ojibwa (Chippewa) of the Lake Superior Region, often called Saulteaux from their meeting place at the falls (Sault) of Sault Ste Marie. Jenness, *op. cit.*, p. 277. In his 'General Report of the Manetoba District for 1820' Peter Fidler stated that the 'Bungees or Soteaux . . . obtained the Name of *Bungees* by us from the word Bungee in their Language signifying small or little which they so frequently repeated when their supplies was not adequate to their wants, that they have thus obtained the word as a fixed term to the whole Tribe. These Indians are not originally natives of these Parts, but were first introduced by the North West Company about the year 1797 - before this there were a very few Straglers - they being then Induserous they was induced by the Reports of the Canadians that Beaver abounded here & was invited to leave their original Lands about the Rain Lake & the Western borders of Lake Superior - now they finding this Country so much more plentiful in Provisions than their own & the Beaver being then plentiful - they have become quite habituated to these parts & I believe will never return to their own Lands again . . .'. B.51/e/1, p. 30. See also B.22/e/1, p. 24.

³ See p. 4, n. 1.

and part clear. Trusted the Bungees a little debt and they went away, gave two Indians some ammunition to go on hunting.

August 24, Monday. Wind ENE a fresh breeze with thunder and heavy rain all day. The men employed within doors.

August 25, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent five men away in the boat to the nets. Caught six sturgeon. Trusted the Maccana Indians some debt.

August 26, Wednesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. Two men setting nets, two men ailing, the rest variously employed. At 8 p.m. two Canada Masters arrived in two light canoes at their own house on their journey to the northward.

August 27, Thursday. Wind variable from SE to N cloudy weather with rain at times. Three men attending the nets, caught twenty sturgeon. James Hourie¹ still unfit for duty, the rest employed about various jobs.

August 28, Friday. Wind ENE a fresh breeze, weather as yesterday. Two men attending the nets, caught nineteen sturgeon. At 7 a.m. eight canoes arrived from York Factory, thirty-two men, all of which are miserably poor having had little to subsist on but a pittance of flour and oatmeal. Mr Oman returned back when he met the canoes, on account of there being many Bungees Indians in the Cedar Lake, and we are apprehensive that the two canoes sent to Swan River² will be robbed as there is many of them gone that way.

August 29, Saturday. Wind variable moderate breezes with cloudy weather. The men making masts and poles for their canoes. Six sturgeon from the nets today. Opened some of the packages. At noon some of the Indian hunters arrived, brought part of two moose deer and a little dried meat which they traded for liquor.

August 30, Sunday. Wind in the south quarter light breezes with cloudy weather.

August 31, Monday. Wind westerly fresh breezes with cloudy weather. Five men with myself repacking of goods, two men at the nets; twenty sturgeon from them today.

September 1, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Four men employed at the nets, fifteen sturgeon today. The rest pitching and repairing the canoes. Trusted several Indians a little debt and they went away.

¹ James Hourie, bowsman, from 'St Hallo' (?St Ola, Mainland), Orkney Islands, was about 26 years of age in 1795. His contract, dating from 1791, was for five years at £6 per annum plus £2 per annum when employed inland. A.30/7, fo. 33.

² During season 1795-96 Charles Isham, Henry Hallett and Peter Fidler were employed in the Company's Swan River District. There they met competition from an outpost subordinate to Albany Factory as well as from three rival Canadian interests. See p. xxxviii.

September 2, Wednesday. Wind SW a light breeze with clear weather. The men as yesterday. At noon Mr Shaw¹ and McGilvery² arrived at their house in two light canoes from the Great Carrying Place.³

September 3, Thursday. Wind SE weather as yesterday. At 11 a.m. embarked four canoes for the upper settlement, and the rest got their canoes in readiness against tomorrow. Mr Shaw and his men embarked. In the evening an Indian arrived with a moose deer.

September 4, Friday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. At 10 a.m. embarked for the upper settlement⁴ with five canoes, one of which I am obliged to steer myself, there being no steersman. I have left Mr Oman and Swain in charge of Cumberland House with four more. We paddled till 7 p.m. then put up.

September 5, Saturday. Wind westerly squally with showers of rain. At 5 a.m. we embarked, paddled and set with poles till 7 p.m. then put up above the Sturgeon River.⁵

September 6, Sunday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze. Weather part cloudy and part clear. At 5 p.m. [*sic*] we proceeded, tracked and poled till 7 p.m. then put up above the first rapids.⁶

September 7, Monday. Wind variable first part cloudy. At 5 a.m. we embarked, tracked and set with poles till 7 p.m. then put up.

September 8, Tuesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with flying showers of rain. At 5 a.m. we embarked, paddled till half past 6 p.m. then put up.

September 9, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday At 5 p.m. [*sic*] we proceeded, tracked till 7 p.m. then put up.

¹ The kindly, 'enterprising but dissipated' Angus Shaw (Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1929), p. xlvi), who became a partner in the North West Company in 1792. For a biography, see W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 497-8. See also Elaine Allan Mitchell, 'The North West Company Agreement of 1795' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1955), Vol. XXXVI, p. 130.

² Duncan McGillivray. For his journal kept during the previous season at the North West Company's post in direct competition with the Hudson's Bay Company's Buckingham House, see Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5*. For a biographical note, see Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

³ That is, from Grand Portage, Lake Superior, the inland headquarters of the North West Company, some 1800 miles distant from Montreal. Although Grand Portage was found to be on American territory after the signing of the Jay Treaty of 1794 it was several years before the North Westers removed to the mouth of the Kaministiquia River and not until 1807 that they called their depot Fort William. See Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), I, 6-7, and Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

⁴ Buckingham House. See p. 11, n. 3.

⁵ According to the younger Alexander Henry this was a collateral channel of the Saskatchewan. See Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 477n.

⁶ Squaw Rapid. See Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, p. 17 *et seq.* for remarks about travelling along this part of the Saskatchewan River in 1794 and Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 477 *et seq.* for Alexander Henry's description of a similar journey made in late August 1808.

September 10, Thursday. Wind NW a small breeze with cloudy weather. At 5 p.m. [*sic*] we embarked, paddled till 7 p.m., then arrived where Mr Chastillain¹ had built a house of 100 feet long for the Canada Company.² James Sanderson and the other three canoes were waiting for us here,³ Mr Shaw with eighteen canoes went from here at 8 this morning.⁴

September 11, Friday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked and tracked till 6 p.m. then put up four miles up the North Branch. I have left James Sanderson and two men more with one canoe load of goods, as also utensils for building a house.⁵

September 12, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At half past 5 a.m. we proceeded, tracked till 2 p.m., afterwards paddled till 5 p.m. then put up to pitch our canoes.

September 13, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes weather part cloudy and part clear. At 5 a.m. we proceeded, tracked and set with poles till 7 p.m. then put up.

September 14, Monday. Wind variable with showers of rain most part of the day. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 a.m. we embarked and set with poles as before till

¹ Described in May 1794 by John Cornelius Van Driel (who was summer master of the Hudson's Bay Company's South Branch House) as 'Louis Chastelain, a man well versed in the Indian Manners & Language'. B.239/b/58, fo. 38. See *infra*, p. 75, n. 3.

² The North West Company. Tomison had passed, without comment, the abandoned post at 'Nipawi' (present-day Nipawin, Saskatchewan) built by Chastelain for the North West Company in 1794 following his retreat from South Branch House after the Gros Ventres had destroyed the Hudson's Bay Company's South Branch House. See p. xxvii, n. 2. James Bird's neighbouring 'Nippowin House' (built for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1794 and closed in the following year) was also passed without remark.

³ He was presumably with the canoes which left Cumberland House on 3 September. James Sanderson (Sandison) from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay) in the Orkneys joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1779 as a labourer. A.16/32, fo. 139; A.30/7, fo. 37. Sanderson was not only useful as a steersman, canoe-builder and carpenter but also in 'going out to meet or trade with Indians'. B.49/f/2, fo. 6-6d. References to him will also be found in *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XV, E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, editors, *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journals 1775-82 Second Series, 1779-82* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1952).

⁴ For a copy of the letter of this date addressed by Tomison to George Sutherland, who had been locum tenens at York Factory during Joseph Colen's absence in England, outfit 1794-95, see p. 61.

⁵ James Bird left Cumberland House on 15 October following with four canoes lightly laden with trading goods, and on the evening of the sixth day of travel up the Saskatchewan River put up 'a little above Woo neip powin'. After two days' more travel he reached the place where 'James Sandison and two men [were] building a House'. B.27/a/1. Bird took charge of this post during the winter of 1795-96 and called it Carlton House. This first Carlton House (see also p. 53, n. 1) was situated on the north shore of the Saskatchewan below the junction of the North and South Branches, and just below the junction of Peonan Creek with the Saskatchewan. This Carlton House, closed in 1801 (p. xcii), was probably near the site of 'Fort des Prairies' (at 'Upper Nipawi') mentioned by Alexander Henry the elder in January 1776 (James Bain, editor, *Travels & Adventures In Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776 by Alexander Henry Fur Trader* (Toronto, 1901), p. 275). See also E.3/1, fo. 90; B.49/a/31, 14 August 1801. The origin of the name is unknown, but it is likely that it was called after Carlton House in Pall Mall, London, which was then the residence of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George IV.

9 p.m. then put up at the Crossing Place¹ where Mr Shaw and his people had put up at noon. By accident had a canoe broke by a stick under water which detained us for some time, some part of the goods got wet but not damaged.

September 15, Tuesday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with small showers of rain all day. Sent three men a hunting, killed three buffalo but at so great a distance they could bring but little of the flesh.

September 16, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh gale with flying clouds. At 5 a.m. sent three canoes ahead to hunt, also James Gaddy² and some others went on foot within, myself opened some of the packages that I thought had got wet. On surveying the contents, I found it was entirely dry, notwithstanding there was ten inches water in the canoe. At 4 p.m. the hunters returned, killed nothing. We embarked and tracked till 8 p.m. then put up.

September 17, Thursday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze weather part clear and part cloudy. At 5 a.m. we proceeded as before till 7 p.m. then put up: came up with the three canoes that went on head, they having killed two buffalo which was divided amongst the canoes.

September 18, Friday. Wind WNW a strong breeze with clear weather. At 5 a.m. we proceeded, tracked, paddled and poled till a half past 6 p.m. then put up. Killed two buffalo.

September 19, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At half past 5 a.m. proceeded as before till 6 p.m. then put up at the Eagle Hill.³

September 20, Sunday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then put up above the Fighting River.⁴

September 21, Monday. Wind variable with very hot weather. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 a.m. we proceeded as before till 7 p.m. then put up above the Turtle River.⁵

¹ Called 'the Mounté' by Duncan McGillivray in 1794. He said that a road went from it 'to the S[outh]. B[ranch]. Fort across the neck or point of land which separates the 2 Branches of the River'. The Crossing Place was the region in which the gentlemen and their clerks took to horse (monter, to mount) to hunt and provide fresh meat for the canoemen. Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, p. 22, and n. 1. See also Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 490-1.

² Presumably James Gaddy, senior, from Kirkwall, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who was paid £30 per annum and described in 1797 as being 'The only One that Speaks the Blackfoot & Blood Indian Language'. He joined the Company in 1781 when he was about 21 years of age. A.30/6, fo. 26; A.30/7, fo. 75. For references to his trading excursions across the plains in the direction of the Rockies, see Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³ Eaglehill Creek which flows north into the Saskatchewan at Township 39, Range 10, West of the Third Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 24.

⁴ Battle River, Saskatchewan.

⁵ Turtlelake River, Saskatchewan.

September 22, Tuesday. Wind westerly a strong breeze with clear weather. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 a.m. proceeded as yesterday till 7 p.m. then put up above the Island House.¹

September 23, Wednesday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked, tracked and paddled till a half past 5 p.m. then put up below the Red Deer Hills. Killed a fat buck.

September 24, Thursday. Wind variable from E to NW fresh breezes with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked, sailed and tracked till 6 p.m. then put up.

September 25, Friday. Wind northerly squally with showers of rain. At half past 5 a.m. we embarked and tracked till 5 p.m. then put up.

September 26, Saturday. Wind NW a stiff breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 6 a.m. we proceeded, tracked till noon, then met Magnus Spence² and three men more with sixteen horses: by these I sent one-third of the cargo.

September 27, Sunday. Wind as yesterday with clear moderate weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked, and tracked till 11 then arrived at Buckingham House,³ found all well thank God, but sorry to hear of the death of so

¹ The abandoned Pine Island Fort (or Fort de l'Isle) of the North West Company and Manchester House of the Hudson's Bay Company. See p. xvii, n. 1. Both posts were built in the fall of 1786. The site was on an island or peninsula 'on the east bank of the river, about half a mile north of the entrance of The Big Gully into the Saskatchewan'. Pine Island Fort, abandoned spring 1794, and Manchester House, abandoned after being plundered in 1793, were in ruins when Duncan McGillivray reached the spot on 25 September 1794. Morton, *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, pp. xli, 4, 27; B.24/a/2, fos. 20d., 30, 31. From Robert Longmoor's and William Tomison's Manchester House journal for 1786-87 (B.121/a/1, 12, 20, 23 October and 2 November 1786) it appears that Peter Pangman [Gregory, McLeod & Co.] and the Hudson's Bay Company established their posts in the fall of 1786 near where Donald McKay, preceding them by a few weeks, had built a house. William Holmes [of the North West Company] was the fourth to appear on the scene to build. In 1787 Gregory, McLeod & Co. united with the North West Company. Donald McKay later withdrew from his private venture and joined the Hudson's Bay Company. According to Peter Fidler's 1792 journal (copied fair at a later date and included in E.3/1, fos. 68d.-96d.), he arrived on 4 October at Manchester House 'built in 1786 upon an Island near the North shore'. He continued: 'at the Lower end of the Island, a Canadian House, whose Master is Mr Peter Pangman - a little above it an old Canadian House deserted some years back built by Mr Donald McKay in Company with Mr Angus Shaw & others a new company at that time, now they are all in one since 1787 - also a little above this Last mentioned house an other old small Canadian House built by one Champaigne - also belonging at that time to another concern, but they only remained there one Winter. The Island is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile Long - & no pine at present upon it, altho at first it was well covered with that wood, but the different buildings & the firewood have quite destroyed it the river here is upwards of 900 yards wide, including the width of the Island which is about 400'.

² Magnus Spence, senior, from 'Bursa' or 'Burza' (?Birsay, Mainland), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1783. He was about 31 years of age in 1796 and earning £20 per annum as a steersman and linguist. A.30/7, fo. 38; A.32/2, fo. 14. He was not only a good steersman but also a good buffalo hunter and very useful 'for going out to meet Indians'. B.49/f/2, fos. 6d.-7.

³ Buckingham House (in present-day Alberta) was built by William Tomison and Peter Fidler in the autumn of 1792 to oppose the North West Company's Fort George which had been built by James Hughes about a quarter of a mile lower down the river in the preceding summer. E.3/1, 14 October 1792; B.24/a/1, 12 October 1792. According to A. S. Morton (*Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, p. xliii, n. 1), the site of Fort George was in the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ section of Section 24, Township

many useful Indians, both in killing furs and procuring birchbark for us; little or none has been procured this summer on that account.

September 28, Monday. Wind in the north quarter cloudy weather with showers of rain. Myself with some others opening packages and repacking them again. Opened a roll of tobacco which is as rotten as ever.

September 29, Tuesday. Wind variable fresh breezes with cloudy weather. The smith fixing his bellows and mending them, the rest pitching canoes and slinging packages to go by land to where the Canada Company has built this summer.¹ Weighed a roll of tobacco which is charged 75 lbs. and found it to be no more than 54; finding this deficiencies, induces me to weigh the whole, which in all amounted to 50 lbs. This with the ill assortment of goods sent up will be the means to lessen the trade. Mr Shaw arrived here with eighteen heavy loaded canoes and 105 men.²

September 30, Wednesday. Wind westerly a small breeze weather part clear and part cloudy. At 7 p.m. [*sic*] embarked five canoes with half cargoes for up above, also crossed a number of horses to go by land with the dry goods to be managed by eight men most part of which are lame. At 7 p.m. crossed I crossed the goods as also myself.

October 1, Thursday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 8 a.m. got all the horses harnessed and set off travelled till a half past 5 p.m. then put up. [Margin: 15 miles]

October 2, Friday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At 6 a.m. we set off and travelled till 6 p.m. then put up. The Indian I engaged to conduct us up killed one bull buffalo of which we had a meal. [Margin: 20 miles]

56, Range 6, West of the 4th Meridian, and so about five and a half miles up the river from Moose Creek. It was on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan. Buckingham House was doubtless named after Buckingham House, London, the former residence of the Duke of Buckingham which King George III bought from Sir Charles Sheffield in 1762 and settled on Queen Charlotte in 1775 in lieu of Somerset House.

¹ The first Fort Augustus, built by James Hughes. It was on the left or north-west bank of the Saskatchewan River about 1½ miles above the mouth of Sturgeon River and in Section 15, Township 55, Range 22, West of the Fourth Meridian. See Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 311, n. 1; Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 566, n. 111.

² At the end of season 1795-96 Tomison added the following remarks to his 'List of Mens Names at Cumberland, Neppewan [Carlton House] Buckingham and Edmonton House [1795-]1796': '... Mr Shaw arrived at the upper Settlements 29th September with 19 large Canoes loaded with 450 Pieces of goods 90 lbs. each, of which there was 140 kegs of high Wines or Strong Rum Distilled in Canada Each keg Containing 8 gallons the above goods was Conducted by 105 men, myself arrived at the same time with 8 Canoes maned with 32 men myself included, loaded with 96 Pieces of goods of inferior weight, of which there was 33 kegs of Brandy and one of Rum which Contained 25½ gallons of Brandy and 8½ Rum, this was but a small quantity when divided in two Parts to act against so strong an opposition, these traders 5 years ago had only 10 Canoes at their upper Posts but now they have increased there Number to 19 and your Honours has decreased from 12 to eight a bad method to enlarge trade'. B.49/f/2, fo. 7d.

October 3, Saturday. Wind NW squally with rain last night and heavy showers all day. At 7 a.m. we set off and travelled till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 p.m. then put up. The Indian killed a cow of which we had enough for two meals. [Margin: 20 miles]

October 4, Sunday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with very warm weather. At 7 a.m. we set off and travelled till 7 p.m. at noon the great Beaver Hills in sight. [Margin: 25 miles]

October 5, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with warm weather. At 7 a.m. we set off and travelled till 6 p.m., then arrived where the Canada Companies¹ has built houses during the summer; those sent by water arrived at noon. The distance by water is as near as the distance by land, I compute it to [be] 106 west of Buckingham House and one mile above where Mr Fidler returned.² [Margin: 26 miles]

October 6, Tuesday. Wind westerly a small breeze with very hot weather. Several men with myself looking out for building wood but found very little and very inconvenient for so late a season of the year. In the evening crossed over the goods to the north side.

October 7, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men collecting stuff for building; there is not a stick near to where the house is to be erected which will cause much trouble and require a long time. Several Indians arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco, also had 100 lbs. of provisions from an Indian woman.

October 8, Thursday. Wind northerly a strong breeze with clear weather. The men floating down the stuff they fell yesterday by water, two excepted sent out with the hunter who returned in the evening, brought part of two buffalo. Also one tent of Indians arrived, brought a few skins and a little provisions. Gilbert Laughton³ and an Indian arrived from Buckingham House by land on the north side.

October 9, Friday. Wind NW a small breeze with cloudy weather. Gilbert Laughton and one man hewing posts for the house and the rest floating down stuff for the building. One tent of Indians came from the other side, brought some fresh meat and a few beaver skins: they are all very troublesome for liquor.

October 10, Saturday. Wind NW strong breezes all day with flying

¹ See p. xxxii.

² See p. 52. Fidler estimated the distance he travelled by land in 1793 as 145 miles (p. xxxix, n. 4) and as 130 miles when 'walking upon the River' from 13-17 March 1797. It took twenty-eight minutes to walk from 'Tea river or red willow creek' to Edmonton House. E.3/2, pp. 70-5; and B.24/a/4, B.49/a/27^b, 13 and 26 March 1797.

³ The list of names of 'Servants York Inland', [1795]-1796, includes Gilbert Laughton (joined 1783), smith etc., from 'Burra' (?Burray Island), Orkney Islands, aged 32 years, wages £30 per annum, and the remark, 'there is not his equal in this Country for ingenuity, the best Canoe builder likewise'. A.30/7, fo. 34.

shower of rain. The men employed as yesterday. The Indians still drunk.

October 11, Sunday. Wind northerly a strong gale with cloudy weather. Trusted several Indians a little debt and some of them went away. Also sent one man down to Buckingham House.

October 12, Monday. Wind WNW a small breeze with cloudy mild weather. The men collecting stuff for building. Trusted two Indians a little debt and put them across the river.

October 13, Tuesday. Wind northerly a moderate breeze cloudy weather with a little rain at times. The men employed carrying wood up the bank and began the building.¹

October 14, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Twelve men working at the building, four men getting stones for the chimneys, one man fetching meat, four men making a saw-pit, and the rest collecting small pine sticks for the roof.

October 15, Thursday. Wind northerly light breezes with fine weather. Twelve men working at the building, four men collecting stones for the chimneys, and the rest collecting small sticks for the roof. In the evening the last of the Indians took debt and went away. At 5 p.m. two young Indians arrived for tobacco and powder as also brandy; the former they got but the latter I could not give without I had given the whole keg neat as it was, not being master of one small [keg] to distribute the brandy in. My neighbour has got two coopers at work daily making kegs from two quarts to six gallons which saves them a great quantity of liquor and brings them many skins. I desired a cooper might be sent inland several years ago but none has been sent as yet; it must be a silly notion to send strong liquor inland without a cooper to make small kegs to divide it in, it is well known the natives has no kegs of their own.

October 16, Friday. Wind NW a small breeze with clear warm weather. Four men working at the chimneys, twelve men a building, two men at the pit-saw, one looking for the horses, and the rest with myself brought down beams for the house. At 4 p.m. two Indians arrived from the westward on horseback.

October 17, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed at various branches in the building. At 3 p.m. one family of Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

October 18, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. Traded with the Sussew Indians² and they went away, have brought no

¹ Of the first Edmonton House, which was within musket-shot of the first Fort Augustus. See p. xxxi; and p. 12, n. 1.

² The Sussew (Sarcee, 'Not Good'), who had become separated from the Athapaskan family. See Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, 1932), pp. 324-6; Edward Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson's Bay* (London, 1790), pp. 198-200; and Elliott

more than sixty beaver. At noon six Muddy River Indians¹ arrived and at 5 p.m. they went away: they brought 120 lbs. of fat meat and thirty made beaver in furs.

October 19, Monday. Wind NW weather as yesterday. Four men building the chimneys, twelve men working at the building, two men at the pit-saw, and the rest floated down 200 small sticks for the roof. In the afternoon several Southward² and Swampy Ground Stone Indians³ arrived.

October 20, Tuesday. Wind NW a strong gale with clear weather. The men employed as yesterday. The Indians more troublesome for liquor than ever I knew them before, occasioned by several instances, first place there is no house, in the next there is no kegs of any kind to give them brandy in so that they are obliged to carry their skins elsewhere and several Indians that used to trade with us has not come here on that account.

October 21, Wednesday. Wind northerly a small breeze with clear weather. Two men crossing to and again, the rest employed at different branches in the building way. At 5 p.m. got all the Indians away and one more came for a man and horses to fetch meat.

October 22, Thursday. Wind SW a fresh breeze, clear weather. Two

Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), II, 531-2. In his 'short Account of Edmonton District' dated 31 August 1815, James Bird wrote, 'The Sussew Indians inhabit the country laying between the red Deer and Battle Rivers, from the Rocky Mountain to the Beaver Lake; their habits of Life are much the same as the Blood Indians but in their manners and disposition towards Europeans they resemble the Southward Indians. Their Language evidently proves them to be descended from the Chippewians or Northward Indians'. B.60/e/1, fo. 4.

¹ The Piegan ('poorly dressed robe') or Muddy (Missouri) River Indians were one of three tribes of the Blackfoot nation. See Jenness, *op. cit.*, p. 319; Umfreville, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-3; Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), pp. 252-70; and Coues, *op. cit.*, II, p. 523 *et seq.* Peter Fidler and John Ward, both starting without knowing a single word of the language of the warlike 'Pe kan ow or Muddy river Indians', spent the winter of 1792-93 with them. E.3/2, pp. 2-69, 'Journal of a Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains, in 1792 & 3 by Peter Fidler'. In his 'short Account of Edmonton District' dated 31 August 1815, James Bird wrote, 'The Muddy River Indians inhabit the Country bordering on the Rocky Mountain from the Red Deer River to the Missouri; they are reckoned the most powerful of all the tribes I have mentioned, they possess many more Horses than their Neighbours, and their country is richer both in Buffalo and Beaver'. B.60/e/1, fo. 4d.

² In his chapter 'Ethnography of Fort Vermilion' [Saskatchewan River], circa 1809, Alexander Henry the younger stated that the Kinistineaux were called Crees by Canadians and Southern Indians by servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 533. See also pp. 510-16. In his 'Short Account of Carlton District', dated 29 May 1815, John Peter Pruden referred to 'Southward Indians or Crees', a number of whom sometimes traded at Paint Creek (or River) post which operated in opposition to Fort Vermilion. B.27/e/1, fo. 2-2d.; B.60/e/1, fos. 3, 5. See also Jenness, *op. cit.*, p. 283 *et seq.*, 316-17.

³ Swampy Ground Assiniboiné. Assiniboiné, 'the people that cook with hot stones'. Jenness, *op. cit.*, p. 308. According to Alexander Henry the younger (about 1809) they inhabited 'the strong wood W. of Fort Augustus, along the Panbian [Pembina] River, never frequent the plains, and are excellent beaver hunters'. Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 523; also 516-18.

men sawing plank for flooring, six men working at the chimney, and the rest roofing the house. At 10 p.m. the man that went for meat returned and brought one horse-load of meat and another of skins.

October 23, Friday. Wind westerly a small breeze with fine weather. The men as yesterday. At noon an Indian arrived with two horse loaded of meat.

October 24, Saturday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. Ten men collecting timber for the pit-saw and the rest employed at the chimneys and roofing the house. One tent of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought a few beaver and a little provisions which they traded and went away. An Indian that had a gun in credit ten days ago and is returned today, being useless to him or any other.

October 25, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Traded with the Indian and he went away. At 4 p.m. a young man that had a gun in credit two days ago came back with it today, as not fit to be used, being split two inches from the breech upwards. I am sorry to inform your honours that there is great complaints from all quarters against the guns, many Indians has lost part of their hands and others have lost the whole hand. One of our best Indians a month ago blowed away part of his hand which has rendered him ever since unable to provide for his family and will for a good while to come.

October 26, Monday. Wind variable cloudy weather with a little rain in the evening. Two men at the pit-saw, Gilbert Laughton making a door, two men plastering the chimney, and the rest pointing the house.

October 27, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. The men as yesterday. Three Muddy River Indians came for tobacco which they got and went off again. At 6 p.m. an Assineapoet Indian¹ arrived, brought a few beaver.

October 28, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with cloudy weather. Two men sawing plank for flooring, ten men collecting stuff for building, Gilbert Laughton making a door, and the rest variously employed. At noon two tents of Muddy River Indian arrived, brought very little. Traded with the Stone Indian and he went away. Removed the goods into the house notwithstanding it is not finished.

October 29, Thursday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear weather. The smith² making a door to the men's house, four men at the pit-saw, six men covering the roof and cutting turf, and the rest rafting down stuff for building a victual house. Traded with the Indians and they went away

¹ An Assiniboine. David Thompson referred to 'Stone Indians called Assine poetwak, or people of stony lands'. Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 40. See also Umfreville, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-7.

² Gilbert Laughton.

very ill pleased, the reason was that there was no small kegs to put liquor in.

October 30, Friday. Wind variable with thick cloudy weather. The smith finished the men's door, four men with myself fell some pieces for the saw, and the rest buried the canoes in the ground for the winter.

October 31, Saturday. Wind variable in the north quarter weather cloudy with rain at times. Four men sawing boards for partitions, Gilbert Laughton putting parchment in the windows, and the rest carrying wood up the bank.

November 1, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather with rain in the morning. Received a little fresh meat from an Indian that came for credit which he got and went away.

November 2, Monday. Wind variable almost calm, clear fine weather. Gilbert Laughton and three men laid the foundation of the victual shed, four men sawing boards, myself and the rest cut and floated down 200 sticks for stockading the front of the house. At 4 p.m. received the disagreeable news that James Spence¹ being very ill, by the arrival of Mr Shaw's men.

November 3, Tuesday. Wind variable cloudy weather. The men employed as yesterday, two excepted which brought the flesh of two buffalo from the hunter. The last evening two canoes of the Grants Company² arrived which will be very detrimental to the trade this year.

November 4, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men sawing ribbons for the stockades, two men cutting turf to cover the house, six men a building, the rest with myself floating down stockades plank etc. The water raised in the river five inches today.

November 5, Thursday. Wind in the north quarter light breezes with clear weather. The builders and sawyers as yesterday, and the rest carried the stockades up the bank.

¹ James Spence, senior, of 'Birsay' (?Birsay, Mainland), Orkney Islands. He joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1773 and in the [1795]–96 list of names of 'Servants York Inland' his age was given as 42 years, his wages £25 per annum, and his employment as that of steersman. He died at Buckingham House on 27 November 1795 and was buried two days later, his will dated 6 November (proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 25 November 1796) having been witnessed by two Hudson's Bay men and Angus Shaw, partner of the North West Company. His coffin was made by the joiner at Fort George. Spence was survived by his wife, Nestichio (daughter of Isaac Batt) and their four children, James, Andrew, George and Peggy. A.30/6, fo. 78; A.30/7, fo. 38; B.24/a/3; A.36/12. Numerous references to James Spence are included in J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934); *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XIV, E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, editors, *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journal 1775–82 First Series, 1775–79* (London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1951) and *H.B.R.S.*, XV. This James Spence and his wife should not be confused with the Spences mentioned in Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–9.

² The fourth arrival was presumably Tomison's third competitor, Mr [James] King. See p. xxxii, n. 2.

November 6, Friday. Wind variable from west to N fresh breezes weather part cloudy and part clear. The men employed as yesterday.

November 7, Saturday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear cold weather. Employed as follows: four men at the pit-saw, two men with horses hauling in turf to cover the house, and the rest covered the house therewith and cut stockades to their proper lengths. Snowed and blown very hard last night, much ice in the river today.

November 8, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday, a quantity of ice in the river.

November 9, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather. So much ice driving in the river that prevents the sawyers from crossing the river. The men employed within doors. At noon our hunters arrived for men to fetch meat, which we are much in need of at present, not having a morsel in the house; sent off three men with horses to fetch meat. Also an Indian arrived brought a few beaver to trade.¹

November 10, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday with clear sharp weather. Gilbert Laughton and three men more levelling the floor of the house and the sawyers making a saw-pit on this side, the rest pointing and cutting stockades. At 3 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought the most part of four buffalo. Traded with the Indian that arrived yesterday, gave him some small articles and credit for a gun and iron work.

November 11, Wednesday. Wind variable with cloudy weather. Four men sawing plank, the smith and two men laying the trading room floor, the tailor making clothing for the hunter, and the rest pointing the house.

November 12, Thursday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze. Weather as yesterday. Sent two men to stay at the hunting tent, four men sawing plank, the smith and one man as yesterday, the tailor making boys coats, and the rest employed digging a trench and fitting stockades to the ribbons.

November 13, Friday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. Sent four men² down to Buckingham House, and the rest employed as yesterday.

November 14, Saturday. Wind variable from W to N fresh breezes with clear weather. The men employed as before. At noon an Indian arrived, brought a few skins which he traded for liquor and went away. At 3 p.m. the hunter and two men came home, brought three buffalo.

¹ Tomison received a letter dated 4 November from James Spence at Buckingham House. See p. 48.

² John Irvin(e), William Isbister, William Tate and Robert Garrock (1st or 2nd?). They carried Tomison's letter of the preceding day's date to James Spence. See p. 48.

November 15, Sunday. Wind variable in the west quarter cloudy mild weather. The men returned to the hunting tent. At 3 p.m. two Indians arrived which crossed the river on horseback which has been done for some time past: they brought forty beaver which they traded for liquor and went away.

November 16, Monday. Wind SE a small breeze weather cloudy with snow. Gilbert Laughton putting up a partition between the trading room and master's apartment, the rest digging a trench for the front stockades. Received twelve beaver in credit from one of the Michelemaccana Indians.

November 17, Tuesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy and part clear. Gilbert Laughton and one man employed in carpenter way, and the rest putting up stockades.

November 18, Wednesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. Tailor making boys coats for trade and the rest employed as yesterday. In the evening two Indians arrived, brought a trifle of furs to trade.

November 19, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men sawing boards for doors, tailor making boys coats for trade, the rest employed as yesterday. Finished stockading the front of the house.

November 20, Friday. Wind ESE a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. Sent four to fetch meat, and the rest variously employed. Traded with the Indians, and paid one of them thirty beaver in goods for birchrind brought to Buckingham House last summer. At noon crossed over the river.

November 21, Saturday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with clear weather. The men employed cutting away the bank and making a track from the gates to the river. At 3 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought four red deer and one poor buffalo.

November 22, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At noon three Sussee Indians arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco etc.

November 23, Monday. Wind northerly a small breeze with thick rimy weather. Four men sawing plank for flooring, and the rest brought home a flagstaff and began building a small house for erecting the smith's forge.

November 24, Tuesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with clear sharp weather. The sawyers as before, two men making a sled for hauling firewood, and the rest building the smith's shop. Two Blood Indians¹ came for tobacco which they got and went away.

¹ Blood Indians were one of the tribes in the Blackfoot nation. Umfreville, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-3; Coues, *op. cit.*, II, p. 523 *et seq.* James Bird, 'A short Account of Edmonton District', 31 August 1815, 'The Blood Indians reside, principally, between the Red Deer River and the Bad River from within

November 25, Wednesday. Wind westerly a small breeze with clear sharp weather. The men hauling home plank and slabs for flooring. At noon one tent of Blood Indians arrived.

November 26, Thursday. Wind SW weather as before. Two men with horses hauling home stones for the smith's forge, four men at the pit-saw, Gilbert Laughton with the rest finished building and mudding the smith's shop. Traded with the Blood Indians and they went away.

November 27, Friday. Wind variable with cloudy cold weather. Sent four men to fetch red deers flesh from the hunting tent. Three men sawing boards for partitions, and the rest assisting the smith to erect his forge.

November 28, Saturday. Wind SE a gentle breeze cloudy rimy weather. The men hauling home some plank and boards and finished the smith's forge. At noon the men returned from Buckingham House, brought the smith's utensils and part of the four bundles of trading goods left there last autumn with some letters which gave us the agreeable news of the safe arrival of your honours ship.¹

November 29, Sunday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cloudy thick weather.

November 30, Monday. Wind SE a small breeze with cloudy cold weather. Two men sawing stuff for sleds, the smith making a door, John Mowat² very ill for these two days past, and the rest hauling birchwood (for the smith's use) to make charcoal.

December 1, Tuesday. Wind SW a middling breeze with a drizzling snow towards evening. Three men at the pit-saw, two men fetching flesh, one man making gates, and the rest hauling home birch to make charcoal for the smith's use. Last night an Indian arrived for men to fetch furs.

December 2, Wednesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. Sent three men with four horses to fetch the furs, the tailor making boys coats to send down to Buckingham House, and the rest as before.

December 3, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with cloudy weather. Sent two men to fetch meat, the tailor as yesterday, the smith and one man stowing the birch to make coal, and the rest hauled in some logs and firewood. An Indian came in for ice chisels and to beg tobacco, also the hunter came home for two gallons of brandy which he got and went away.

one hundred miles of the Rocky Mountain to within about the same distance of the conjunction of the Red Deer with the Bad River'. B.60/e/1, fo. 4; A. Arrowsmith, *Map . . . North America*, 1811.

¹ Letters dated 3 September, 15 October and 19 November from York Fort (Joseph Colen), Cumberland House (George Sutherland) and Buckingham House (James Swain) respectively were received this day. See pp. 49-50.

² John Mowat from 'Burra' (Burray Island), Orkney Islands, bowsman, was about 29 years of age at this time. He joined the Company in 1790. A.32/4, fo. 28; A.30/7, fo. 35.

December 4, Friday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with a drizzling snow. Two men finished making the gates, three men sawing boards, the smith and two men attending the coal kiln, and the rest variously employed. In the evening those came home that went for meat, brought three red deer.

December 5, Saturday. Wind NE a small breeze cloudy weather. The smith and one man putting the gates up. The want of hinges causes much trouble to erect them. The rest employed about various jobs.

December 6, Sunday. Wind in the south quarter a small breeze with cloudy weather. At noon two men came home from the hunting tent, brought one red deer.

December 7, Monday. Wind variable light breezes with clear fine weather. Three men sawing plank, John Mowat still bad with rheumatic pains, and the rest variously employed. In the evening erected a flagstaff sixty feet above ground.

December 8, Tuesday. Wind SW a small breeze with cloudy weather. Three men at the pit-saw, two men laying the lower floor of the house, and the smith putting his shop in order, and the rest fell and brought home firewood. At 2 p.m. one tent of Sussew Indians arrived poorly gooded.

December 9, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tailor making Indian clothing and the rest employed as yesterday. In the evening two Stone Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

December 10, Thursday. Wind westerly a stiff gale with thick cloudy weather. The smith and one man beating out old iron for steels and awl blades, tailor making leaders clothing,¹ three men at the saw, one man still ailing, and the rest edging plank and laying the floor. Traded with the Indians and they went away; also two more arrived, brought a few beaver skins.

December 11, Friday. Wind SW a small breeze weather as yesterday. The smith and one man making fire-steels, tailor making clothing to send down to Buckingham House, and the rest variously employed. Traded with the Indians and they went away. Last night Magnus Spence and the other two arrived, brought 200 parchment beaver from one Indian and forty more from two of the Macana Indians being part of their credits.

December 12, Saturday. Wind WNW a small breeze with cloudy mild weather. The men as yesterday. At noon three Blood Indians arrived for tobacco which they got and went away.

December 13, Sunday. Wind SE a gentle breeze weather part cloudy and part clear. At noon two tents of Bloods Indians arrived, brought very little of anything.

December 14, Monday. Wind variable clear fine weather. The smith and

¹ Clothing for Indian captains or leaders.

one man as before, the tailor making clothing, three sawing boards, one man still ailing, the rest fell and carried in some pieces to the pit. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

December 15, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. The men employed as yesterday.

December 16, Wednesday. Wind southerly a small breeze with cloudy weather. The smith making awl blades, two men employed in the carpenter way, three sawing boards, tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest fell and carried timber to the saw-pit. At 5 p.m. two Indians arrived, brought a few beaver.

December 17, Thursday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. The smith finished 18 dozen awl blades, the rest employed putting up their cabins. The Indians traded and went away.

December 18, Friday. Wind NE a small breeze with cloudy weather. The smith sharpening the saws, the tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest employed as yesterday. At noon four Stone Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

December 19, Saturday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with a drizzling snow all day. The smith and tailor as before, and the rest putting up their cabins. Traded with the Indians and they went away. These brought sixty-six beaver, forty-six of which they traded for liquor, and refused all other kind of goods.

December 20, Sunday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with a little snow. At noon three young Indians arrived brought the disagreeable news of James Spence's death¹ which I am sorry for.

December 21, Monday. Wind northerly a small breeze with cold cloudy weather. The smith making a trading room door, the tailor making clothing, three men sawing boards, and the rest fell and collected firewood. Gave the Indians some tobacco and ammunition and they went away. At 2 p.m. one man came home from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

December 22, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday weather cloudy and inclineable to snow. Sent three men down to Buckingham House,² also four men to fetch meat, and the rest employed as yesterday. Traded thirty beaver from a Stone Indian and he went away.

December 23, Wednesday. Wind variable in the east quarter clear sharp weather. The smith making a few nails for doors and the rest employed as on the preceding day. At 5 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought four poor buffalo.

December 24, Thursday. Wind westerly a stiff gale with snow and

¹ See p. 17, n. 1.

² For copies of the two letters (dated 20 December) which they carried, see pp. 51-3.

drift most of the day. Sent two men to fetch meat. The smith finished two doors and hung them, the rest cut a little firewood and made some sleds.

December 25, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with clear fine weather. Sent two men to the hunting tent; in the evening the two men came home that went for meat, brought a poor cow buffalo.

December 26, Saturday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with very warm weather. At noon one tent of Stone Indians arrived, brought very little.

December 27, Sunday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with thawy weather. Traded with the Indians and they went away, these brought no more than twenty-seven beaver.

December 28, Monday. Wind SSW a gentle breeze with cloudy weather. Two men edging boards, tailor making clothing for the men, and the rest cut firewood.

December 29, Tuesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with a drizzling snow most of the day. The men as yesterday. In the evening one man came from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

December 30, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent five men to fetch meat, two men sawing boards, the smith and one man in the carpenter way, tailor making clothing for the men, and the rest cut firewood.

December 31, Thursday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather, and snowed towards noon. The men employed as on the preceding day. At 4 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought five poor buffalo.

January 1, 1796, Friday. Wind variable with clear sharp weather. It being the first day of the New Year did not put the men to duty.

January 2, Saturday. Wind SW a gentle breeze weather part cloudy and part clear. The men employed about various duty.

January 3, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh gale with snow and drift. At 3 p.m. a poor Indian arrived, brought a few beaver killed by his women, he not having killed a skin for some years past, always being hauled on a sledge.

January 4, Monday. Wind variable light breezes with clear sharp weather. Three men at the pit-saw, smith and tailor in their way, one man in the carpenter way and the rest cut firewood. At noon one tent of Susseu Indians arrived, brought a few wolves and a little provisions.

January 5, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze first part cloudy latter part clear weather. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

January 6, Wednesday. Wind westerly a fresh gale with clear weather. The men variously employed.

January 7, Thursday. Wind as yesterday with snow and drift towards evening. The smith cleaning the trading guns, and the tailor making boys coats and the rest cut firewood. All the Fall Indians¹ came to the other house.

January 8, Friday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with a drizzling snow. The smith employed in the carpenter way, the tailor cutting out Indian clothing, and the rest variously employed.

January 9, Saturday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cold weather. Sent six men with horses for men to fetch meat. And the rest cut firewood.

January 10, Sunday. Wind ESE a fresh breeze with cold drifting weather. In the evening three Muddy River Indians arrived each carrying four skins on his back, having been ten days on their journey hither.

January 11, Monday. Wind variable with a drizzling snow and sharp weather. The smith repairing trading guns and the rest cut firewood. At noon one tent of Southward Indians arrived with a few furs to trade.

January 12, Tuesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze clear sharp weather. Tailor making Indian clothing, the smith mending a gun. The rest cut firewood. Traded with the Indians and they went away. At 1 p.m. Robert Garson² and George Spence³ arrived from Buckingham House,⁴ brought eight guns, a few small articles and a little worthless medicine-box containing a bottle of hartshorn froze useless, one bottle of Turlington,⁵

¹ Edward Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson's Bay* (London, 1790), p. 197, 'Fall Indians. This nation is thus named by us, and by the Nehethawa Indians [Creeps], from their inhabiting a country on the Southern branch of the river, where the rapids are frequent . . . the Canadian-French . . . call them *gros ventres*, or big-bellies; and that without any reason, as they are as comely and as well made as any tribe whatever; and are very far from being remarkable for their corpulency . . .'. See also Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), II, 530-1; Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, 1932), p. 326; Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1929), pp. 13-16, 61-4. James Bird, 'A short Account of Edmonton District', 31 August 1815, 'The Fall Indians live principally on the line of the Bad River and to the Southward of it, from within one hundred miles of the Rocky Mountain to the conjunction of the Red Deer River with the Bad River'. B.60/e/1, fo. 4-4d.

² Robert Garson from Sandwick (presumably Sandwick, South Ronaldsay, Orkney Islands), canoeman, had been in the Company's employ since 1787. A.30/7, fo. 32. Although he was not fit for brigade work, being 'short-winded', he was 'a valuable servant at the House, and taking Care of Horses, also going to fetch Birchrind'. He spent the summers of 1795 and 96 at Buckingham House. B.49/f/1, fo. 3d.; B.49/f/2, fo. 3d.

³ George Spence, canoeman, from 'Birsay' (Birsay, Mainland), Orkney Islands, was born about 1773 and joined the Company in 1791. A.30/7, fos. 37, 81.

⁴ For copies of letters from James Bird (Le corns, i.e. Carlton House) and James Swain (Buckingham House) received this day, see pp. 53-4, 56.

⁵ 'Turlington's Balsam of Life', now a synonym for compound tincture of benzoin, was one of the earliest patent medicines originating in England. The original balsam, for which a 'King's Royal

one bottle of lavender, a small bottle of tincture of rhubarb, jalap 1 lb. good-for-nothing, ipecacuanha $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., Glauber salts 2 lbs., sulphur 2 lbs., basilicon 2 lbs., powder of rhubarb $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., Spanish juice 2 lbs., 4 oz. strengthening plaster, 5 gallipots, 24 small vials, some corks for ditto, a part of one old sheet and as much lint as would dress a common wound six times. An Indian has been waiting here two days for medicines for ten beaver but I cannot give him any as those articles he wants I have not received; medicines of late years has been very much curtailed and I do not know for what reason. God knows I have never made a bad use of whatever has been under my hands. Since my first settling Hudsons House¹ there has been upon an average 100 beaver traded yearly for that commodity by me, but this year there will be none.

January 13, Wednesday. Wind westerly a small breeze with very sharp weather. The smith putting up a cloth bench in the trading room and the rest cut firewood. One man came that put some furs in the house some time ago.

January 14, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest employed as before. At 5 p.m. several Swampy Ground Stone Indians arrived, brought a few beaver.

January 15, Friday. Wind NE a small breeze with snow all day. The men as yesterday. One Indian got four gallons of brandy and went away, this he has got for nothing. Traded with the Stone Indians and they went away: these brought 150 parchment beaver which is a poor hunt for five able men.

January 16, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh gale with cold drifting weather. The smith employed in the carpenter way, tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest hauling snow out of the yard. At 8 p.m. an Indian arrived for tobacco and liquor which he got and went away.

January 17, Sunday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with cold sharp weather. Traded with three Indians that arrived at 3 a.m., brought ninety-two made beaver and a small quantity of provisions.

Patent' was granted in 1744 to Robert Turlington of London, merchant, contained some twenty-seven ingredients and was claimed as a cure for the 'stone, gravel, cholic, and inward weaknesses'. Acknowledgment is made to the Librarian of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain for directing attention to information on the subject in *The Chemist and Druggist*, 23 September 1905 (p. 525), 25 June 1927 (p. 837), and 26 June 1954 (p. 691), and in Waldo R. Wedel and George B. Griffenhagen, 'An English Balsam among the Dakota Aborigines' in *American Journal of Pharmacy*, December 1954, pp. 409-15.

¹ Tomison's Hudson House, built in 1779, was sometimes called Lower Hudson House to distinguish it from Robert Longmoor's 'Upper Settlement' or 'Upper Hudson House' (occupied during season 1778-79 and fourteen miles higher up the North Saskatchewan River). Tomison's Hudson House was situated on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan in N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ section, Section 16, Township 48, Range 2, West of the Third Meridian, in the Nesbitt Forest Reserve. See *H.B.R.S.*, XIV, 311, n. 1, and *H.B.R.S.*, XV, 69, n. 1.

January 18, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The smith employed putting up shelves in the trading room, tailor making leaders clothing, two men at the pit-saw, and the rest cut firewood. At 11 a.m. the Indians went away.

January 19, Tuesday. Wind northerly a small breeze with sharp weather. The tailor as before, smith making six hatchets over again that came up last summer, they being as thin as a common garden spade and bent like a piece of iron hoop. The rest fell stuff for stockades. At 5 p.m. an Indian lad arrived, brought three beaver.

January 20, Wednesday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with thawy weather. Sent eight men to the hunting tent for meat, the rest employed as yesterday.

January 21, Thursday. Wind NW a fresh gale first part clear latter part cloudy. The men employed as yesterday. At 5 p.m. those came home that went for flesh, brought $6\frac{1}{2}$ buffalo.

January 22, Friday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with sharp weather. Sent six men to fetch flesh, the rest hauled and cut firewood.

January 23, Saturday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with very sharp weather. Smith mending the lock of a musketoons¹ that was broken on the passage up, tailor as before, and the rest hauled and cut firewood. At 5 p.m. those came home that went for flesh, brought five cows.

January 24, Sunday. Wind westerly a small breeze very cold weather.

January 25, Monday. Wind variable clear sharp weather. Sent men to fetch flesh. The smith making a table, one man lame, and the rest cut firewood.

January 26, Tuesday. Wind northerly a strong breeze with drift all day. The men cut firewood. At 2 p.m. the Indians came in that the men fetch the skins from some time ago; also some others accompanied them, brought barely their credits. At 4 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought five buffalo.

January 27, Wednesday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear sharp weather. The men cut and hauled firewood, the Indians still drinking.

January 28, Thursday. Wind variable almost calm but very sharp weather. The smith finished the table, the tailor making Indian clothing. Sent eight men to fetch meat, one man lame, and the rest cut firewood. The Indians still drunk.

January 29, Friday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze first part clear

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary* (quoting Thomas Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, 1772) 'Blunderbuss, Blunderbuss is a short fire arm with a large bore . . . The shortest sort of them are called musketoons'.

latter part cloudy. The smith employed in the carpenter way, tailor making clothing, one man making a sledge for hauling firewood. At 4 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought one moose and six buffalo.

January 30, Saturday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with cloudy mild weather. Sent six men to fetch meat, the smith finished the trading room, and the rest cut firewood. One tent of Blood Indians arrived, brought a few wolves and a trifle of provisions.

January 31, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with cloudy warm weather. Traded with the Blood Indians and they went away: these have brought seventy-five wolves and 100 lbs. provisions.

February 1, Monday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. The smith doing odd jobs in the house, one making a sled for hauling firewood. The tailor cutting out Indian clothing. The rest cut and hauled firewood. At 3 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought three buffalo.

February 2, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes clear warm weather. Sent six men for meat. The smith making broad ice chisels out of narrow ones, two men with horses hauling home firewood, and the rest fell ditto. At 3 p.m. an Indian arrived for ice chisels, those he had in the winter was soon useless by breaking in several pieces. This is a general complaint amongst all that visit us.

February 3, Wednesday. Wind weather as yesterday. The smith and one man making ice chisels and the rest fell and collected firewood. At 2 p.m. those came home that went for flesh, brought five buffalo. At 3 p.m. a Stone Indian arrived for tobacco and brandy which I was induced to give as they got from the other house.¹

February 4, Thursday. Wind westerly a small breeze clear fine weather. Sent three men to fetch meat, tailor and smith as before, and the rest got firewood. At noon one Stone Indian and his wife arrived, brought a few wolves and foxes with a little provisions.

February 5, Friday. Wind easterly a small breeze clear sharp weather. Smith and tailor in their way and the rest collecting firewood. At 3 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought three buffalo. The Indians traded and went away and two men came for tobacco and went off again.

February 6, Saturday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. The men cut firewood. At 10 a.m. one tent of Sussew and one tent of Southward Indians arrived poorly gooded.

February 7, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with clear mild

¹ Apparently a reference to Fort Augustus rather than to the houses occupied by Beaubien or King. See p. xxxii.

weather. Traded with the Indians and they went away. At noon an Indian man and his wife arrived, brought about fifty beaver.

February 8, Monday. Wind SE a gentle breeze clear fine weather. Sent two men away to fetch some skins from Indians. The smith repairing a trading gun and the rest collecting stockades. Traded with the Indian that arrived yesterday and he went away. Also traded with the Indian that came here long ago but he did not go away: he has brought 260 beaver, and has been most extravagantly expensive, which I was obliged to comply with or lose the skins after being brought to the house.

February 9, Tuesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze clear sharp weather. The men employed collecting stockades, one man excepted who has been lame for some time past by cutting his hand.

February 10, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent one man away with an Indian for some credits, the rest employed as yesterday.

February 11, Thursday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Four men sawing stuff for necessary use, tailor making leaders clothing, and the rest collecting stockades. At 5 p.m. an Indian arrived, brought four skins on his back: he has come from beyond the Elder Berry River¹ which empties itself into the Athapiscow country. He has been four nights on his journey hither.

February 12, Friday. Wind variable almost calm clear warm weather. The smith cleaning and repairing trading guns and the rest variously employed. At 3 p.m. the man I sent away the other day returned, brought about forty beaver.

February 13, Saturday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. Sent four men away with the Indian that came the 11th instant to bring their credits, two men with horse hauling the stockades, and the rest hauling firewood. At 1 p.m. John Flet² and Thomas Taylor³ returned, brought about 100 made beaver in sundry furs.

February 14, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 8 a.m. two Blood Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away. At one p.m. there arrived nine able men two of which were rigged.⁴

February 15, Monday. Wind NE a small breeze weather part clear and part cloudy. Tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest fell and hauled stockades. Traded with the Indians and they went away. At 1 p.m. Magnus Spence came home from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

¹ Pembina River, sometimes also referred to as Summerberry River.

² John Flet(t), steersman, from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands, aged about 32 years in 1796, had been in the Company's employ since 1782. A.30/7, fo. 31.

³ Thomas Taylor, bowsman, from 'the Island S. Ronaldshe' (South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1792. A.30/7, fo. 39; A.32/5, fo. 134.

⁴ I.e. rigged out in clothing made by the Edmonton House tailor.

February 16, Tuesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze cloudy weather. Sent seven men to fetch meat, two men hauling stockades, tailor making some Indian coats, and the rest fell some timber pieces.

February 17, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday weather cloudy with a drizzling snow. The tailor as before and the rest cut firewood. At 3 p.m. those that went for flesh came home, brought five buffalo. The hunter also came home having killed as much as is required.

February 18, Thursday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. Sent seven men to fetch flesh, two men making ready to set off for Buckingham House, and the rest doing jobs within doors.

February 19, Friday. Wind northerly and blowed hard towards evening. The five men at the house cut firewood. At 3 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought eight buffalo. Sent two men down to Buckingham House with two hundred beaver.¹

February 20, Saturday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. The men variously employed.

February 21, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear sharp weather. At 4 p.m. Gilbert Laughton and the other three returned, brought 180 beaver, being all they could get from seven able men: they have made no hunts at all. One Indian also accompanied them.

February 22, Monday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear sharp weather. Sent five men to fetch meat, tailor making Indian clothing, and the rest cut firewood. Traded with the Indian that arrived yesterday and paid off the hunter.

February 23, Tuesday. Wind NW a small breeze with clear weather. The smith repairing broken hatchets returned from the Indians, tailor as before, and the rest cut firewood. At 3 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought four buffalo.

February 24, Wednesday. Wind NE a fresh gale with snow all day. The smith and one man making fire-steels and the rest variously employed.

February 25, Thursday. Wind as yesterday first part clear latter part cloudy with snow. Sent eight men to fetch meat, two men laying the floor of the master's room. The smith as before and the rest cleared the snow of the yard. At noon Mr Swain arrived with a gun to repair, also to get a little clothing made, being almost naked as we all are for want of another tailor.

February 26, Friday. Wind NE a stiff gale with snow and drift all day. The smith employed as before, one man ailing, and the rest cut firewood.

¹ For Tomison's letters dated 11, 12 and 15 February addressed to Carlton House, Cumberland House and Buckingham House respectively, see pp. 54-7.

February 27, Saturday. Wind northerly with severe sharp weather. The smith finished one hundred fire-steels and the rest cut firewood. At 4 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought six buffalo.

February 28, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with very cold weather.

February 29, Monday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear sharp weather. The tailor making clothing for Mr Swain, and one man still ailing, the rest cut firewood. In the evening a Stone Indian arrived, brought four skins on his back.

March 1, Tuesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with clear sharp weather. Sent six men [MS: meat] to fetch meat. The tailor employed as yesterday and the rest hauling stockades and firewood.

March 2, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. In the evening those came home that went for meat, brought three buffalo which is the last. The Indian went away.

March 3, Thursday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear sharp weather. Robert Garrock much better and the rest cut firewood and hauled stockades.

March 4, Friday. Wind NE a fresh gale with snow and sleet most part of the day. The smith repairing a trading gun that Mr Swain brought up. In the afternoon cleared the snow out of the yard.

March 5, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh gale clear sharp weather. The smith stocking a gun that was broken at the hunting tent, tailor making clothing for Mr Swain, and the rest cut firewood and hauled three logs for a press.

March 6, Sunday. Wind variable fresh breezes with a drizzling snow. At 3 p.m. three Indians arrived, brought about thirty beaver and some pitch.

March 7, Monday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze cloudy weather with a drizzling snow. Two men sawing stuff for a press, the smith stocking a gun, two men repaired the chimneys, and the rest hauled firewood.

March 8, Tuesday. Wind NW a fresh gale thawed much with frequent showers of snow. Four men at the pit-saw, smith repairing a gun, tailor making clothing for Mr Swain, and the rest variously employed. At 10 a.m. the Indians went away.

March 9, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with a great thaw. Four men hewing and sawing ribbons for stockades, the smith as before, and the rest hauling stockades and firewood.

March 10, Thursday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with warm thawing weather. Four men hauling stockades, tailor working for the men, and

the rest cutting ice out of the river. At 10 a.m. two men arrived from Buckingham House, brought some large kettles and a few small articles.

March 11, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed putting ice into the victual house and hauling stockades. At 7 a.m. Mr Swain and three men went down to Buckingham House, one of which is to get canoe wood.

March 12, Saturday. Wind variable fresh breezes clear weather. The men employed hauling stockades and sawing ribbons for ditto. At noon one tent of Sussew Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

March 13, Sunday. Wind westerly squally with showers of rain. At 4 p.m. one tent of Indians arrived from the westward, brought little or nothing with them. The Sussew Indians traded and went away.

March 14, Monday. Wind northerly a small breeze with cloudy weather. The smith making two drawing knives, tailor making boys coats, four men sawing ribbons, and the rest hauling stockades and cutting firewood. The Indian traded a few skins for liquor and got drunk.

March 15, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear fine weather. Four men with horses hauling firewood, the smith finished two drawing knives and repaired two hatchets, tailor as before, and the rest got birch for the press.

March 16, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Seven men cutting ice out of the river to put into the victual house, two men making a press, the rest shaving stockades and hauling birch for mallets and wedges for the press. The Indians pitched away: these I have employed to procure birchbark for canoes.

March 17, Thursday. Wind northerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The smith repairing a trading gun, the rest employed as yesterday.

March 18, Friday. Wind easterly a small breeze weather as yesterday. The smith repairing a pistol, two men making wedges for the press, and the rest shaving stockades. In the evening a Swampy Ground Stone Indian arrived, brought nothing.

March 19, Saturday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. The smith making broad ice chisels out of narrow ones, the rest employed as yesterday. At noon one tent of Indians arrived, brought very little of anything. One of these I was obliged to rig being a staid Indian. In the evening put up the press.

March 20, Sunday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze cloudy weather. Traded with most of the Indians and they went away: four able men brought no more than seventy made beaver and now they are going to war.

March 21, Monday. Wind easterly a strong breeze with clear cold weather. The smith making ready to set off for Buckingham House tomorrow, the tailor working for the men, and the rest shaving stockades.

March 22, Tuesday. Wind variable in the east quarter clear sharp weather. Sent Gilbert Laughton and Nicholas Allen¹ down to Buckingham House to get wood for building and repairing canoes. Tailor making boys coats for trade, and the rest collected fifty pieces of timber for building.

March 23, Wednesday. Wind SSW gentle breezes cloudy cold weather. The men as yesterday, George Gutcher² excepted who is ailing.

March 24, Thursday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear warm weather. The men as before. Traded a few wolves from an Indian that arrived in the night and at noon he went away.

March 25, Friday. Wind NW a fresh gale with clear weather. The men as before, Magnus Spence and James Hourie excepted which I sent away with an Indian lad that arrived in the night to fetch a few beaver skins.

March 26, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear warm weather. The men as before. In the evening a Stone Indian arrived, brought nothing: he informs me he was carrying twenty skins on his back but was obliged to leave them two days journey from this.

March 27, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy and part clear. At 7 a.m. sent Alexander Flet³ and Nicholas Leith⁴ away with the Indian that arrived last evening, to bring the skins he left, as also those at the tents, it being catch that catch can for no Indians get liberty to go to the houses with their furs.

March 28, Monday. Wind SE a gentle breeze weather. Weather as yesterday, two men laying a part of the upper floor, and the rest shaving stockades. At noon Magnus Spence and James Hourie came home, brought forty made beaver at the expense of twelve beaver of sundry articles of goods besides paying for the furs. Two Blood Indians came for tobacco and brandy.

¹ Nicholas Allen, bowsman, from 'Burra' (?Burray Island), Orkney Islands, was about 35 years of age in 1796. He joined the Company in 1783. A.30/7, fo. 29.

² George Gutcher (Goucher) joined the Company in 1792. In the list of names of servants for [1795]-1796 he was described as a canoeman from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, and about 21 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 32.

³ Alexander Flet(t), tailor and steersman, from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1787. A.30/7, fo. 31. In 1796 he was described as a good steersman and tailor as well as a good man to send 'out to meet or trade with Indians'. He was also, to Tomison's knowledge, the best man in the country 'for building Chimneys'. B.49/f/2, fos. 2d.-3.

⁴ Nicholas Leith, bowsman, whose name appears as Nicholas Leigh in the list of men inland from York Factory during season 1795-96. According to this source he came from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Island's and joined the Company in 1789. In 1796 he was about 27 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 34.

March 29, Tuesday. Wind westerly a small breeze with clear weather. The men as yesterday. Gave the Blood Indians tobacco and brandy. At 6 p.m. they went away and at 2 p.m. they arrived poorly gooded.

March 30, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday a strong gale with clear weather. The men carrying firewood up the bank. Traded with the Indians but they are very poor.

March 31, Thursday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. Two men laying the floor and the rest cut away the willows in the front of the house. At noon, Alexander Flet and Nicholas Leith returned, brought ninety-four made beaver.

April 1, Friday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with clear weather. The men as yesterday.

April 2, Saturday. Wind WNW a stiff gale weather cloudy with snow till noon afterwards clear. The men variously employed.

April 3, Sunday. Wind variable in the south quarter fresh breezes with clear fine weather. In the evening two Stone Indians came for tobacco, as also three Muddy River Indians.

April 4, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent two men with the Stone Indians to get birchrind. Six men making a bridge to get on and off the river ice and the rest blocking out a bateau out of two sticks. At 4 p.m. one of the Maccana Indians arrived and paid a credit of nineteen beaver, also eight more Muddy River Indians came for tobacco, brandy and etc.: they have had in all 12 lbs. of tobacco, 6 lbs. powder, 9 gallons of brandy and $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of vermilion, without receiving a skin.

April 5, Tuesday. Wind variable with clear warm weather. The men brought home the two sticks for the bateau and attending the house. At noon the Muddy River Indians arrived, above thirty able men but poorly gooded. Out of thirteen men that sent for tobacco no more than two were rigged and last year no less than ten or twelve rigged.

April 6, Wednesday. Wind in the north quarter a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. Four men working at the bateau. The rest assisting the Indians across the river, finished trading with them by two in the morning and they all went away by 7 a.m.: they brought no more than 400 wolves, 500 small foxes, fifty-four beaver and a small quantity of dried provisions.

April 7, Thursday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Four men working at the bateau and the rest digging a trench for the stockades. In the evening one family of Indians arrived, brought about thirty beaver and three rolls of birchrind. The river is broken in several places.

April 8, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men finished the bateau. Tailor making clothing for the men, one man ailing, and the rest

pointing stockades and fitting them to the ribbon. At noon one tent of Indians brought thirty beaver and three rolls of birchrind not very good. Also in the evening William Tate¹ and Robert Garrock² returned, brought eight rolls of birchrind very bad.

April 9, Saturday. Wind variable gentle breezes with clear fine weather. The men as before paid the Indians for the birchrind and they went away.

April 10, Sunday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze clear weather. In the afternoon one tent of Stone Indians arrived, brought twelve wolves and some dried provisions. Also Mr Swain's hunter³ arrived, brought a few skins which he traded for liquor and went away. The river broke.

April 11, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men as before. One tent of Southward and Stone Indians arrived, brought no more than seventeen skins and 70 lbs. of provisions.

April 12, Tuesday. Wind in the south quarter a gentle breeze with very hot weather. The men employed about various jobs. At 3 p.m. Alexander Flet and George Gun⁴ came home from some Indians I sent them in search of yesterday, brought 140 beaver, also two young Indians accompanied them for tobacco and brandy which I was induced to give them for nothing, on account of my daring neighbours who do not wish us to get a skin.

April 13, Wednesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with clear hot weather. The men putting up stockades. At 4 p.m. the Indians arrived that part of the skins was brought from yesterday.

April 14, Thursday. Wind variable from S to W light breezes with very hot weather. The men as yesterday. Sent three men away with brandy and tobacco to meet Indians. In the afternoon a young Indian arrived for men to fetch birchrind. At 6 p.m. crossed horses for that purpose. The Indians still drunk.

April 15, Friday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Sent three men away for birchrind. The rest putting up stockades. Traded with some of the Indians and they went away. At 4 p.m. Alexander Flet,

¹ William Tate, bowsman, from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, aged about 26 years in 1796, joined the Company in 1789. A.30/7, fo. 39.

² Robert Garrock, 1st or 2nd? Both men were on the York Factory inland establishment. A.30/7, fos. 31-32. Robert Garrock, 2nd, came from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and was about 20 years of age when he joined the Company as a labourer in 1791 at £6 per annum. A.30/5, fo. 46; A.32/4, fo. 89; see *infra*, p. 119 for a note on Robert Garrock, 1st.

³ The hunter for Buckingham House.

⁴ George Gun from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, canoeman, joined the Company in 1791 for five years at £6 per annum. He was about 26 years of age in 1796. A.30/7, fo. 32. He was a good working 'hand', but as his short-sightedness prevented him from being a good canoeman he spent the summers inland. B.49/f/1, fo. 1d.; B.49/f/2, fo. 3d.

John Paplay¹ and James Hutchins² returned, brought upwards of 200 parchment beaver: when they came to the Indians they found six Frenchmen debauching them with rum and telling them all the lies they were master of, which is not a few, to get their furs from them but the timely arrival of Sandy Flet deprived them of their expectations.

April 16, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh gale weather part cloudy and part clear. Sent three men away in search of Indians, the rest putting up stockades. At 5 p.m. four tents of Indians arrived, and has not brought ten skins amongst them all, also one tent of Assinepoet Indians brought nothing.

April 17, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. At 10 a.m. several Muddy River Indians arrived, traded with them and crossed them over again. The three men returned.

April 18, Monday. Wind NE a fresh gale with snow and drift all day. At noon the Indians arrived that the furs belong to, gave them some brandy and they got drunk. Traded with the Stone Indians and they went away. At 4 p.m. Will Tate and two men with him also returned, brought ten rolls of birchrind. The Indian that procured it came in with them, one of them has had the misfortune of part of his hand being shot away.

April 19, Tuesday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with clear weather. Tailor making boys coats and the rest fell firewood, the ground being too much froze for putting up stockades. In the evening the Stone Indian went away.

April 20, Wednesday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The tailor making boys coats for trade and the rest putting up stockades. Traded with the Indians that arrived last and they went away. They have brought 200 beaver.

April 21, Thursday. Wind variable from S to NW with cloudy weather. The men taking down a part of the stockades that was put up last fall, except three I sent away with an Indian to bring more birchrind for canoes.

April 22, Friday. Wind variable a fresh breeze with clear weather. Eight men putting up stockades, eight more with myself rafting them down. In the evening one tent of Stone Indians arrived, brought two rolls of birchrind and a few beaver.

¹ John Paplay, bowsman, from 'Stennes' (Stenness, Mainland), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1792 for five years at £6 per annum. He was about 21 years of age in 1796 and considered 'a strong able hand'. A.30/7, fo. 36; B.49/f/2, fo. 6.

² James Hutchins (Hutchinson) joined the Company in 1791. His contract as a canoeman was for five years at £6 per annum and he was about 24 years of age in 1796. He came from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands. A.30/7, fo. 33. He was reported in 1796 as not being so useful as expected because he had been 'much hurt with the Scurvy at York Factory' before coming inland. B.49/f/2, fo. 4.

April 23, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh breeze weather part clear and part cloudy. The tailor making clothing for the men and the rest finished the stockades: they are forty yards on each square. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

April 24, Sunday. Wind westerly weather as yesterday. At 6 p.m. two Muddy River Indians arrived, brought fifteen skins which they traded and went off again.

April 25, Monday. Wind NW a strong gale with clear weather. Four men getting roots for repairing canoes and the rest variously employed.

April 26, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with hot weather. At 10 a.m. embarked three men in a canoe for Buckingham House¹ with fifteen rolls of birchrind, and two bags of pemmican; the rest packed twenty bundles of furs. Those came home that went for bark, brought ten rolls.

April 27, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent four men to take care of the horses, as all round us is on fire.² The rest packed twenty-five bundles of furs. In the evening took up the canoes for fear of being destroyed by fire.

April 28, Thursday. Wind NW a fresh gale weather hazy. The men employed at the press packed twenty-five bundles of furs. Those came home for another man to assist them to take care of the horses, they were obliged to drive them from place to place all night.

April 29, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed at the press packed thirty bundles.

April 30, Saturday. Wind WSW fresh breezes with clear weather. The men employed at the press packed fourteen bundles of furs. Paid the Indian for bringing birchrind and he went away. At 5 p.m. a Bungee Indian arrived, brought nothing.

May 1, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh gale cloudy weather. At noon an Indian arrived that had thirty beaver in credit last autumn and has brought no more than one small otter.

May 2, Monday. Wind NW a fresh gale with snow at times. Got a canoe ready to send down to Buckingham House with birchrind.

May 3, Tuesday. Wind variable in the north quarter a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. Sent three men down with eight rolls of birchrind and 400 parchment beaver,³ two men repairing a canoe, the rest employed at various jobs. One tent of Muddy River Indians arrived which traded and went away, except one man and his wife that wishes to go down to see York Factory.

¹ For a copy of Tomison's letter to James Swain, see p. 57.

² See entry for 15 May.

³ For a copy of Tomison's letter of 2 May to James Swain at Buckingham House, see p. 58.

May 4, Wednesday. Wind variable fresh breezes with a little sleet in the evening. The men variously employed. At 2 p.m. John Mowat returned with Nicholas Allen, Nicholas Leith and Hurie, having met William Ritch¹ which went back with the birchrind and furs.

May 5, Thursday. Wind NW a fresh gale cloudy cold weather. The men stockading in a place for a watch house.

May 6, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with clear fine weather. Six men collecting stockades and the rest putting up ditto.

May 7, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent two men away with an Indian to fetch some beaver, two men repairing a canoe, and the rest finished stockading a place for a watch house. At noon eight men in two light canoes arrived from Buckingham House,² they say the river is unaccountably shallow, which appears to be too true by the bottoms of the light canoes being hurt.

May 8, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh gale with cloudy weather. At 2 p.m. the two men returned as also an Indian, brought fifty beaver.

May 9, Monday. Wind variable in the east quarter light breezes with clear weather. The men employed pitching and repairing canoes.

May 10, Tuesday. Wind variable from S to NW blown very hard with thunder. The men employed as yesterday. At 7 p.m. two Assinipoet Indians arrived, brought a few parchment beaver.³

May 11, Wednesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Embarked six men in three canoes with thirty bundles of furs, also crossed the horses and forty bundles of furs to go down by land.⁴ The Stone Indians went away. At 7 p.m. three Southward Indians arrived, brought twenty-eight beaver which they traded and went off again.

May 12, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with clear hot weather. Sent ten men off by land with forty bundles of furs, and pitched a canoe, packed seven bundles of furs.

May 13, Friday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with clear hot weather. The men pitching ready for embarking tomorrow.

May 14, Saturday. Wind southerly weather as yesterday. The men

¹ William Ritch (Rich), from 'Burra' (?Burray Island), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1779 and in 1796 was listed as a steersman at £18 per annum. He was then about 35 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 36. See p. 48.

² For a copy of James Swain's letter of 30 April, see p. 58.

³ According to Peter Fidler's entry for 30 May in his Cumberland House journal (B.49/a/27^b), Angus Shaw and his men left Edmonton House [Fort Augustus] on 10 May and Buckingham House [Fort George] on 17 May. Shaw, Duncan McGillivray, and John McDonald arrived at their Company's post on Cumberland Lake on 30 May when, continued Fidler, they had '364 Packs of Furs besides a deal of Provisions', but they had lost one bateau and nearly all its load of pemmican just above the mouth of the South Branch of the Saskatchewan. Shaw and his party continued their journey to Grand Portage on 31 May.

⁴ For a copy of Tomison's letter dated 10 May sent to Buckingham House, see p. 59.

employed cleaning the yard and crossed five tents of Indians to the south side, all going to war.

May 15, Sunday. Wind S a stiff breeze with hot weather. At 8 a.m. embarked six men in three canoes with eleven bundles and three bags of pemmican in each,¹ the water having raised three inches since the other canoes went down. Crossed three tents of Indians to the other side. The Frenchmen set [fire] to the ground some time ago, and this day got into the pines and burnt with great fury which consumed thirty pieces of timber that was collected in the spring and could not be got down for want of water, we had some difficulty to save the other from burning to ashes. The fire flew across the river and set fire to this side also.

May 16, Monday. Wind variable very hot weather. The men variously employed. I was induced to engage another Indian to tent with the hunter as he was lonesome, and there is no keeping one Indian alone.

May 17, Tuesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. The men cleaning the rubbish out of the house and yard.

May 18, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men doing odd jobs about the house. Two swans from the hunter.

May 19, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. One man looking for the horses, and the rest hewing logs for the watch house.

May 20, Friday. Wind and weather much the same as on the preceding days. The men employed as yesterday. Fitted out the hunters and sent them away. At 2 p.m. two canoes and eight men arrived from Buckingham House.² Also at 4 p.m. Mr Southerland,³ Mitchell Oman and James Gaddy Junior⁴ arrived by land; the canoes being much hurt by coming up empty, requires some little time to repair and prevents my embarking immediately.

May 21, Saturday. Wind variable from SE to W fresh breezes with hazy hot weather. At noon we embarked for Buckingham House, having left Alexander Flet in charge of Edmonton House with John Clouston Senior,⁵

¹ For a copy of Tomison's letter of this date sent to Buckingham House, see p. 60.

² For a copy of James Swain's letter of 15 May received by Tomison on 20 May, see p. 60.

³ George Sutherland 'Second & Master' (A.30/7, fo. 38) who had wintered at Cumberland House. He was to be chief inland during Tomison's absence in 1796-97, but first he had to travel with Tomison as far as Cumberland House and from that place take charge of the brigade of fur-laden canoes to York Factory. See p. xiv, n. 2; p. 51.

⁴ James Gaddy, junior, was a canoeman about 22 years of age in 1796 when he was paid at the rate of £6 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 31. He came from St Ola, Kirkwall, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1791. A.32/4, fo. 123. He was stationed at the South Branch House in the summer of 1794, but was fortunately absent with Indians collecting birchbark when the Gros Ventres attacked and murdered Magnus Annel (Annal), Hugh Brough, and William Fea. B.49/f/1, fos. 2d., 7d.

⁵ John Clouston, senior, of Stenness, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who joined the Company in 1794 and was about 28 years of age in 1796 when he was listed as a canoeman. A.30/7, fo. 30.

William Sinclair,¹ William Smith,² and James Morrowick³ and John Pruden.⁴ We paddled till 8 p.m. then put up.

May 22, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we embarked and paddled till half past 7 p.m. then put up.

May 23, Monday. Wind westerly a fresh gale hazy weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and paddled till 11, then arrived at Buckingham House. Put the men to the press, packed eighteen bundles of furs.

May 24, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday weather part cloudy and part clear, with a stiff gale. The men employed at the press and repairing canoes, packed thirty-two bundles of furs.

May 25, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes very warm weather. The men finished packing and freighted the bundles to the water side on horses, also timbered up the canoes that has been repaired and pitched several.

May 26, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men finished pitching canoes and carried them to the water-side as also 4800 lbs. of pemmican. Inspected the stores and trading goods etc. at Buckingham House and appointed eight men to stay all summer and Oman Norquay⁵ to go up to Edmonton House to stay there.

May 27, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with very hot weather. At 7 a.m. we embarked fourteen canoes manned with thirty-four men, also the old boat loaded with provisions and lumber manned with three men, and have left six men with John Pruden at Edmonton House and six at Buckingham, exclusive of two to keep the horses. Alexander Flet takes

¹ William Sinclair, 3rd or 4th? There were four Orkneymen named William Sinclair on the York Factory inland establishment during 1795-96. A.30/7, fo. 37. The first William Sinclair, who later built Oxford House (p. 171), was at Wegg's House in 1795-96. William Sinclair, 2nd, returned to the Orkneys in 1796, but re-engaged and returned inland in the following year. A.30/7, fos. 37, 81; C.1/400; A.30/8, fo. 37; A.30/9, fo. 38.

² Probably William Smith from London who, at the age of 14 in 1795, joined the Company as an apprentice. A.30/7, fo. 27.

³ James Morrowick, 2nd, from 'Harra' (Harray, Mainland), Orkney Islands, was about 18 years of age in 1796. He joined the Company in 1794 and was employed as a labourer at £6 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 35.

⁴ At this time John Peter Pruden from Edmonton, Middlesex, was nearing the end of his five-year apprenticeship to the Hudson's Bay Company. A.30/7, fo. 36. He was not, however, yet considered very capable, being 'rather thoughtless but a very quiet young man'. B.49/f/2, fo. 6. Pruden had spent the winter of 1795-96 with James Bird at Carlton House and had left that place with George Sutherland on 1 May bound for Edmonton House. Sutherland and the others in his party arrived at Edmonton via Buckingham House on 20 May. B.27/a/1; B.49/f/2, fo. 6. For a biographical note on Pruden see *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. I, E. E. Rich, editor, *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1938, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938).

⁵ Oman Norquay (Norquoy) from 'the Island South Ronaldshe' (South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, was about 23 years of age in 1796. He joined the Company as a canoeman in 1791 at £6 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 36; A.32/4, fo. 136. He was considered 'a verry good servant but Weak for going up and down'. B.49/f/2, fo. 5d.

care of Edmonton and James Gaddy¹ of Buckingham, they are both steersmen and could be but ill spared to stay up as there is but few steersmen.

May 28, Saturday. Wind westerly and very squally weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then put up. Killed three buffalo.

May 29, Sunday. Wind WN a stiff gale weather part cloudy and part clear. At 3 p.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then put up.

May 30, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze weather part clear and part cloudy, and colder than it has been for some time past. At 3 a.m. we proceeded and paddled till 7 p.m. then put [up]. Killed three buffalo.

May 31, Tuesday. Wind northerly a moderate breeze with cloudy weather. At 3 a.m. embarked and paddled till 6 p.m. then put [up].

June 1, Wednesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up where Mr Bird wintered,² we were informed by the Canadians that they had gone away three days ago.³

June 2, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we embarked and paddled hard till 8 p.m. then put up.

June 3, Friday. Wind and weather as on the preceding day. At 3 a.m. we proceeded, paddled all day and all night.

June 4, Saturday. Wind and weather much the same as before. At half past two in the morning one canoe, the boat and myself arrived at Cumberland House, found all well thank God; soon after the other twelve canoes arrived.⁴

¹ James Gaddy, senior, 'Summer Master at the Upper Settlements'. A.30/7, fo. 75. Gaddy had spent the preceding winter at Buckingham House and had traded one-third of the furs obtained there. B.49/f/2, fo. 3.

² Carlton House. See p. 9, n. 5; p. 53, n. 1.

³ Bird had left for Cumberland House on 28 May with eight men in three canoes laden with thirty-one bundles of furs and five bags of pemmican. His remaining trade goods had been left at 'the Canadian House' for the summer because Carlton House was not in a proper state of defence and it was too risky to leave it undermanned whilst he was taking the furs down to York Factory. B.27/a/1, *passim*. It was during the summer months, when the Indians had nothing left to trade, that they were tempted to take what they wanted by force if opportunity offered. Bird's North West Company opponents at and in the 'Nippowee' area during 1795-96 were James Finlay and Louis Chastelain. His other Canadian competitors were Mr McGillis (presumably working for David Grant) and François Beaubien or his representative. P. xxxvii; B.49/a/27^a, Bird to George Sutherland, dated La Corne, 4 November 1795.

⁴ Tomison had missed the disturbances of 1 and 2 June. According to Peter Fidler, thirteen canoes of Canadians (including Simon Fraser, Alexander Fraser, William McKay 'and another that was at Isle a la Crosse Shabbuyea [Chaboillez]') arrived from 'the Isle a la Crosse Musk rat river &c' at their post on Cumberland Lake on 1 June. All the Indians in the neighbourhood ran away in the night as they feared 'the Frenchmen' would kill them because one of their friends had murdered an American near Ile-à-la-Crosse during the previous winter. On 2 June 'Charles's Brother alias Beardy' and Little Gut, who were 'known to be the principals in the murder', arrived to trade meat with Fidler. As Beardy landed he was seized by the Canadians. Little Gut escaped by canoe but was chased by a

June 5, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with hazy hot weather.¹

June 6, Monday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cloudy warm weather till the evening, afterwards rain. The men got all ready to embark on the first occasion.

June 7, Tuesday. Wind northerly a stiff breeze weather cloudy with rain all day. Could not embark the canoes.

June 8, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather. At half past 6 a.m. embarked sixteen canoes for York Fort loaded with the furs from the upper settlements and ten bundles more from Cumberland House. My reason for not embarking is owing to several Indians that had debt from me and have not visited this place since.²

June 9, Thursday. Wind southerly a moderate breeze weather part cloudy and part clear. At 9 a.m. three debtors arrived, paid 106 beaver.³

June 10, Friday. Wind northerly fresh breezes weather part cloudy part clear. Gave the Indians a supply of ammunition and they went away the want of ball induced me to get the lend of 32 lbs. from the Canadian Master.⁴

June 11, Saturday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear hot weather. The men have been employed the last four days in cleaning the yard and mending nets.

June 12, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes clear hot weather. A few sturgeon from the nets today.

June 13, Monday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with clear hot weather.

June 14, Tuesday. Wind between SE and E a fresh gale, cloudy weather

Canadian canoe manned by eight, and being overtaken was shot dead by William McKay. Beady was made to confess and, after recommending his eldest son to the protection of George Sutherland, was hanged. The Canadians left the two bodies lying a short distance from their house. Fidler's men dug a grave in which they buried both Indians who had only one terrified Indian man and an Indian boy as mourners. B.49/a/27^b. When reporting the incident to Thomas Stayner at Churchill on 19 July 1796 Joseph Colen stated that the Indians had been guilty of the murder of a servant of the Canadians and some 'Northward Indians' with whom he was tenting. B.239/b/58, fo. 106d. When William McKay wrote to Colen from Pike [Jack] River on 4 June 1797 to protest against his refusal to arrest the murderers of Robert Thomson (see p. xxxiii, n. 3), he took the opportunity to complain that the officer at Cumberland House in the summer of 1796 had, after the departure of the Canadians, buried the victims of their vengeance 'purposely to show the savages that he would wish to support them in their Villainy and at the same time Committing an action beneath an Officer'. B.239/b/66, fo. 11. ←

¹ Fidler recorded that Messrs Roderick McKenzie and Finlay of the North West Company, travelling by light canoe, passed en route to Grand Portage. B.49/a/27^b.

² Fidler mentioned that Messrs George Sutherland, Bird, Wright and Swain accompanied the canoes. The men left with Tomison and Fidler were Henry Spense (carpenter), William Hawkland, William Johnston, Hugh Johnston and James Ross. B.49/a/27^b.

³ Fidler mentioned: '2 Canoes of Canadians loaded with goods arrived here from Pasquia they are to summer here.' B.49/a/27^b.

⁴ Tomison reciprocated on 14 June (according to Fidler) by lending 'Mr Porter the Canadian Master' six skeins of sturgeon twine. B.49/a/27^b.

with small rain. In the evening several Macana Indians arrived, paid seventy beaver of their credits, and many more rests due.

June 15, Wednesday. Wind variable from East to West fresh breezes weather part cloudy and part clear. At 10 a.m. two Canadian canoes belonging to the New Company¹ put up here on their journey to the upper settlements.

June 16, Thursday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. The Macana Indians accompanied the Canadians to the upper settlements.

June 17, Friday. Wind NW a fresh breeze cloudy weather with rain. Several families of Bungees embarked for above, several of [them] wanted credits but did not trust them any as they have not paid their last debts, which has been lost the last two years for want of looking after.

June 18, Saturday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze clear weather.

June 19, Sunday. Wind as yesterday first part clear and latter part cloudy with rain in the evening.

June 20, Monday. Wind NE a moderate breeze. Weather for the most part cloudy. Since the canoes embarked the men have been variously employed such as making, mending and attending the nets. Four men putting up the couples of the new house.²

June 21, Tuesday. Wind in the East quarter fresh breezes part clear and part cloudy.

June 22, Wednesday. Wind SW a stiff gale with clear weather. The carpenter and three men erecting the couples and finished them. William Hawkland [MS: Wawkland]³ constantly employed mending and making nets.

June 23, Thursday. Wind between SW and W a strong gale with rain most part of the day. Could not overhaul the nets.

June 24, Friday. Wind variable between West and NW a fresh gale with shower of rain at times. Carpenters and one man planing boards for the roof, the other two employed in the garden.

June 25, Saturday. Wind between W and NW fresh breezes clear weather. The men employed as yesterday. A few small fish and some sturgeon from the nets. Fourteen canoes passed by from the northwards.⁴

¹ Fidler recorded on this date: '2 Canoes of Bungees arrived from the Basquia . . . also 2 Canoes of Canadians from the same place they belong to two different companies and are going up the river to the upper houses to build they being in great distress for provisions gave them 1 bag of Pemmicon'. B.49/a/27^b.

² Fidler mentioned that on this day three Canadians in a canoe 'went to the Nippowee to Mr Chestelain's with Goods'. B.49/a/27^b.

³ Will Hawkland, listed in 1796 as a labourer at £12 per annum and described as 'A Good Servant' who had been employed inland for a number of years. He was from Stromness in the Orkneys and had joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1787. A.30/7, fo. 33.

⁴ These Canadian canoes on their way to Rainy Lake or Grand Portage had come by the usual route via the Trade Lake expansion of the Churchill River, across Portage du Traite (or Frog Portage

June 26, Sunday. Wind in the east quarter a strong gale with thunder and rain in the evening. A few small fish from the nets.

June 27, Monday. Wind between W and NW a strong gale weather part cloudy and part clear. The men employed as last week, could not overhaul the nets today.

June 28, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes clear fine day. The men employed as before. A few sturgeon and small fish from the nets.

June 29, Wednesday. Wind in the east quarter a fresh breeze with clear weather. The carpenter and one man straightening the nails that came out of the old boat for the roof of the new house, the rest employed at the nets, caught one sturgeon. At 6 a.m. four canoes passed by from the Slave Lake loaded with 100 packs of furs, they left their wintering ground on the 19th of May.¹ The clerk who had the care of the canoes accompanied Mr MacKenzie to the eastern and western sea.²

June 30, Thursday. Wind variable from SE to W fresh breezes with showers of rain in the evening. Carpenter and one man nailing feather edge boards on the roof, the rest employed as yesterday. Three small sturgeon from the nets today.

July 1, Friday. Wind variable from SE to NW strong gales with thunder and rain in the evening. The men employed as yesterday. Four sturgeon from the nets today.

as it was also known later), to present-day Wood Lake, Miron Lake, Sturgeon-weir River, Amisk Lake and Name Lake into Cumberland Lake. Fidler noted on the 25th: '... at 5 a.m. 14 Canoes of Canadians with Mr Levison arrived from the Athapescow and Peace river Settlements they have been 21 Days on their passage from Isle a la Crosse, 4 of which they was confined to this Lake for Wind & Rain – they were 9 Days upon the Methy Carrying place, they having only 4 men to a canoe & 25 Bundles of furs. The 4 Canoes that wintered in the Slave Lake are expected here daily. They say that there are plenty of water all the way – which is a rare circumstance – Peace river clear of Ice 12th April and the Athapescow Lake the 16th May which has been the earliest Spring ever known in that part of the Country since their first settling in it 18 years ago'. B.49/a/27^b.

¹ The entry for 29 June in Peter Fidler's Cumberland House journal reads: 'Early this morning Mr Alexander McKay and 4 Canoes arrived here from the [Great] Slave Lake House – which place they left the 19th of Last month – which was a very quick passage and an early embarkation. They have also a house at the Martin Lake NE of the Slave Lake, from whence they haul their furs late in the Spring to the Slave Lake House to be taken out by Canoes that winters there – and any furs they procure afterwards they carry to the Athapescow House and get there a fresh supply of Goods, as the Slave Lake seldom breaks up till the month of July – so as to be navigable – it is 8 Good days walk in winter with Snow Shoes betwixt the two houses. These Canoes had 5 men in each to make quick dispatch, and had 25 bundles of furs in each ... McKay & Party stayed about 2 hours & again embarked for the Great Carrying place. The Slave Lake Canoes reached their wintering Ground last fall on the 5 Day of October ...'. B.49/a/27^b.

² Alexander McKay (B.49/a/27^b). Alexander Mackenzie journeyed down the Mackenzie to the Arctic Ocean in 1789 and from the Peace River to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. He was accompanied by Alexander McKay on the second journey. See Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, Through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; in the Years 1789 and 1793* (London, 1801). For a biography of Alexander McKay, see W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 473.

July 2, Saturday. Wind in the west quarter fresh gales with rain at intervals. A few sturgeon and some small fish from the nets.

July 3, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze, weather part clear and part cloudy with a small shower in the evening. A few small fish and a few sturgeon from the nets.

July 4, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The carpenter and one man roofing the house, the rest employed about mending the nets. A few small fish from the nets.

July 5, Tuesday. Wind variable from SE to NE a fresh gale with thunder lightning and rain at times. The carpenter finished the roof of the store house. Set three nets today and got two sturgeon.

July 6, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. The carpenter mending doors, two mending and making nets.

July 7, Thursday. Wind variable from SW to N a moderate breeze with clear weather. One man working at the nets, the rest employed as before. Eight sturgeon and a few small fish from the nets.

July 8, Friday. Wind NW light breezes with clear hot weather. The men employed as before. Twenty sturgeon from the nets today. Two Indians arrived, brought some fresh meat and some dried ditto which they traded for liquor.

July 9, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men variously employed. Twenty sturgeon from the nets today. At 3 p.m. the Indian went away.

July 10, Sunday. Wind variable all round light breezes clear hot weather.

July 11, Monday. Wind in the north quarter light breezes with clear hot weather. The carpenter making a door, two men making and mending nets, and the other two took up those that were set. Caught ten sturgeon.

July 12, Tuesday. Wind SE a gentle breeze clear hot weather. Carpenter employed as before, two men working at the nets, the other two working in the garden.¹

July 13, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with very hot weather. The men as yesterday.

July 14, Thursday. Wind in the west quarter fresh breezes with clear

¹ Fidler recorded on 12 July, 'Mr Henry and a Canadian in a Small Canoe arrived at the Canadian house here, they are come for Powder and Twine to make Nets of. This Mr Henry wintered in the Muskrat river this last winter and he and 2 men is erecting a house a little beyond the Goose Lake, to the NE of this place which no doubt will be a detriment to the Trade at this place'. B.49/a/27^b. This Mr Henry was Alexander Henry the younger, a nephew of Alexander Henry the elder. For biographical notes see Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

hot weather. The carpenter edging plank for flooring, the rest as yesterday.

July 15, Friday. Wind between W and NW a fresh gale with showers of rain. The carpenter employed as yesterday, the rest packed five bundles of furs and did other odd jobs.

July 16, Saturday. Wind westerly fresh breezes with a small shower of rain. The carpenter as yesterday and the rest clearing the rubbish out of the yard.

July 17, Sunday. Wind as yesterday clear and hot till evening when it thundered with a shower of rain.

July 18, Monday. Wind as before with clear hot weather. The carpenter and one man laying the floor of the new house, the rest mending and making nets. In the evening received some moose flesh from an Indian.

July 19, Tuesday. Wind between W and SW light breezes with clear hot weather. The men employed as yesterday.

July 20, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear hot weather. The carpenter and one man finished laying half of the floor, the rest employed within doors. Gave the Indians a supply of ammunition and they went off.

July 21, Thursday. Wind variable from SW to SE a gentle breeze with clear hot weather. The carpenter and two men as yesterday, and the other two set five nets. At half past 5 p.m. five canoes arrived loaded with goods from the Rock House.¹

July 22, Friday. Wind in the west quarter a gentle breeze with hot hazy weather. The men here attending the nets. Eleven sturgeon. The people employed working at their canoes.

July 23, Saturday. Wind between NW and N first part cloudy with rain the latter part clear and blowed fresh. The men employed as yesterday, caught five sturgeon from the nets, and pitched three canoes. Four Indians arrived, brought 120 skins and paid part of their credits.

July 24, Sunday. Wind NW first part clear blowing weather latter part calm. Packed three bundles of furs and got all ready for embarking tomorrow please God weather permits. As four canoes would have carried more furs than there is to send down I proposed to Messrs Bird and Fidler for Mr Bird to have gone up with one canoe to his house and one canoe to have been dispatched up above.

July 25, Monday. Wind easterly a small breeze with rain at noon which continued all day. At half past 5 a.m. we embarked in five canoes,

¹ According to Fidler the canoes had made an expeditious passage of twenty-two days and were in charge of James Bird. B.49/a/27^b.

seventeen men, half loaded with furs for York Factory.¹ We paddled till half past 8 p.m. then put up short of Ubasqueah.²

July 26, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up at the Burnt Woods.³

July 27, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with showers of rain at times. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 a.m. we proceeded half through the Cedar Lake.

July 28, Thursday. Wind variable all round the compass cloudy weather. At half past 3 a.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till 2 p.m. then put up below the Great Fall.⁴

July 29, Friday. Wind NNW a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then put up half through the Sea Lake.⁵

July 30, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 6 a.m. we proceeded and run through the Sea Lake with a reefed sail and put up in the Rendevous Lake⁶ at half past 7 p.m.

July 31, Sunday. Wind NW a strong gale weather part cloudy and part clear with showers of rain towards evening. Could not proceed.

August 1, Monday. Wind northerly and blowed very hard with showers of rain. Still weatherbound.

August 2, Tuesday. Wind northerly a moderate breeze with clear

¹ According to Fidler the furs amounted to fifty bundles. The men, besides Fidler, then remaining at Cumberland House were: James Bird, Henry Spense (carpenter), John Brough, Hugh Johnston, William Johnston, James Ross, George Munro, William Tomison, Robert Yorston and William Leith, junior. The last four were 'young hands now come up'. B.49/a/27^b. Fidler's letter to Joseph Colen of this date said that of the fifty bundles of furs sent down, nineteen were from 'Mr Birds trade' [Carlton House]. Fidler requested that if any canoes left for Cumberland House after the ship arrived from England, 'a few Books a Telescope &c' which he expected by her might be sent to him. B.239/b/58, fo. 110d. According to the book of 'Servants Commissions' (A.16/111) no books or other articles were sent to Fidler on his account in 1796, but the following year 'Harrisons British Classics' costing £3 7s. 0d. and his watch (repaired for 16s. 0d.) were forwarded from London to York Factory. *Ibid.*, fos. 39d., 43. In 1798 the following items were sent: '4 foot Aromatic Telescope Dolland' (£17 17s. 0d.); '2 foot do.' (£4 4s. 0d.); '2-8 In. Thermometers' (£2 2s. 0d.); and an 'Ellis Microscope' (£4 4s. 0d.). *Ibid.*, fo. 51d.

² One of the various spellings of the name of a former Indian village at a natural crossing place of the Saskatchewan River and on the site of the town The Pas, Manitoba, which was incorporated in 1912. *Place-Names of Manitoba* (Ottawa, Geographic Board of Canada, 1933), pp. 86-7. For a note on its history during the eighteenth century, see J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 109-10, n. 1.

³ On the Saskatchewan River, 'a fine low dry grassy place called the Burnt Woods'. Peter Fidler, E.3/1, p. 167.

⁴ Grand Rapids where the Saskatchewan River rushes to its mouth in Lake Winnipeg.

⁵ Lake Winnipeg.

⁶ In his Cumberland House journal entry of 25 August 1779 Tomison referred to this lake as 'Bus'kes'cagan or the Lake of Rendevous'. See *H.B.R.S.*, XV, 64. But Fidler regarded both Little Playgreen and Playgreen Lakes as one and referred to them as 'Booscag gan'. See *infra*, p. 64, n. 2. Cf. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-5.

weather. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 a.m. we proceeded and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up at the bottom of the Eachwaymames.¹

August 3, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear fine weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up. At 6 p.m. carried out of Eachwaymames River,² two tents of Indians on the carrying place.

August 4, Thursday. Wind variable gentle breezes clear weather. At half past 3 a.m. we proceeded and paddled and carried till 7 p.m. then put up at the Side Pine.³

August 5, Friday. Wind SW a fresh breeze, hazy hot weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and paddled till 7, then met the canoes from the factory sixteen in number which detained us the remaining part of the day.⁴

August 6, Saturday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we embarked, sailed and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up in Trout River.⁵

August 7, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes clear weather. At 5 a.m. we embarked and paddled, handed and carried till 6 p.m. then put up half through the Knee Lake.

August 8, Monday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with hazy weather. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2 a.m. we proceeded and sailed till 10, then paddled, handed and carried till 6 p.m. and put up in Hill River.

August 9, Tuesday. Wind variable fresh breezes with hot hazy weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded down the falls, paddled, handed and carried till 7 p.m. then put up at Gordon House.

August 10, Wednesday. Wind NW a small breeze first part cloudy with rain afterwards clear. At 4 a.m. we embarked and paddled till 8 p.m. then put up at Steel River point.

August 11, Thursday. Wind variable from W to NW a strong breeze with hazy weather. At half past 3 a.m. we proceeded and about 3 p.m. we arrived at York Fort.

William Tomison

¹ Echimamish, a Cree Indian name meaning 'water flowing both ways', according to David Thompson. The name was originally applied to two streams flowing eastward and westward respectively from the Painted Stone, the portage at the source of the eastward-flowing stream which is now considered to be the source of Hayes River. *Place-Names of Manitoba*, pp. 30, 67. Tomison encamped at the bottom of the Painted Stone.

² The source of Hayes River.

³ See p. 123, n. 3.

⁴ This was the brigade of canoes in charge of George Sutherland who, as Chief Inland, was en route to Edmonton House. See p. 63.

⁵ The part of present-day Hayes River which links Oxford and Knee Lakes. In 1901 'the use of the name [Hayes] was extended to apply to the whole extent of the river from the Painted Stone, instead of to the lowest portion only; the names Apitsibi or Steel, Chukitanaw or Hill, Trout river and Whitewater are superseded'. *Place-Names of Manitoba*, p. 42.

Country Correspondence by Mr William Tomison

William Tomison to James Spence

Edmonton House

12 November 1795¹

Sir, on the ninth instant I received your kind favour dated the 4th instant by which I was sorry to find you enjoyed so ill a state of health as to despair of recovery, but God's will be done, and may we all be enabled by His holy word to prepare for that change which must come sooner or later. I have sent down four men viz. John Irvin,² William Isbister,³ William Tate and Robert Garrock, the two latter are to return as fast as possible, by which you are to send up all the smiths tools, all armourers stores, all the old files for fire-steels, as also the coopers tools, and four bundles of trading goods that was left. My reason for sending for the smiths tools is by reason of the badness of guns, want of nails, fire-steels etc. Many of the guns the Indians has brought back that they had in credit, some of which has not been more than once fired out of, being split two inches from the breech; several Indians were disabled last season by their hands being shot away. This with other circumstances will reduce the trade very much. There is no orris lace come up here nor half so many shirts as I used last year to dress Indians with, not a bit of duffle of any kind has been sent up and only nineteen yards of red baize, not one small blanket. I have no more than 168 lbs. of Low India shot. Should not the two men now sent be able to bring up the things, you will send a man or two to assist them; William Ritch did wrong in leaving the Crossing Place before ice drove in the river and even then he ought to have stayed a day or two after.⁴ I have been much distressed for want of kegs, should John Budge⁵ come up you will send him by the first opportunity;

¹ Spence was at Buckingham House. See p. 61 for Tomison's letter of 10 September to George Sutherland 'forgot to be entered in the beginning'.

² John Irvin (Irvine), junior, a steersman then about 25 years of age and receiving £18 per annum. He was from Stromness, Orkney Islands, and had joined the Company in 1785. A.30/7, fo. 34. He was later called the 1st, to distinguish him from later entrants of the same name.

³ William Isbister, who was from Stenness, Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1791. In 1796 he was listed as a canoe man at £6 per annum and as about 24 years of age. A.30/5, fo. 70; A.30/7, fo. 34; A.32/4, fo. 86. He was 'a very hardy good Servant'. B.49/f/2, fo. 4d.

⁴ According to B.49/f/2, fo. 6, Ritch had been 'sent down with another man to assist those that was Comming up . . . which happened to fire a gun and they mounted their Horses and run Post hast back to Buckingham House, which Distance was above 250 miles'.

⁵ John Budge from 'S. Ronaldshe' (South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1793. He was listed as a canoe man receiving £6 per annum and as being 21 years of age in 1796. A.30/7, fo. 30; A.32/5, fo. 71.

there being no cooper here has been the means of many skins going past this house. We have got a dwelling house built 60 feet in length, 24 in breadth and 17 feet high, and another house of 32 feet long and 18 wide and 16 high, all of which is pine rafted down. So conclude wishing you a better state of health, and success to the Company's affairs I remain your humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. Please to return my most grateful thanks to Mr Shaw for his attention to you.

Joseph Colen to William Tomison

York Fort

3 September 1795¹

Sir, Your request to the Committee of the Honourable Hudsons Bay Company for leave to return home is agreed to; and they have in consequence appointed Mr George Sutherland to succeed you inland: that gentleman accompanies Mr Bird on his return to Cumberland House, with full power to do that which is necessary for the benefit of the service, not doubting but you will give him every information on inland affairs to accomplish the desirable. I remain yours etc., Josh. Colen.

P.S. I have the pleasure to inform you of the safe arrival of the ship *King George*,² Captain John Ritchards,³ the 27th ultimo.

George Sutherland to William Tomison

Cumberland House

15 October 1795

Dear Sir, After a passage of thirty-seven days from York we arrived here safe in four canoes where I found all well. After fitting out Mr Bird with an assortment of trading goods, I find very little remaining.⁴

Indeed, I have very little hopes of getting trade as the Canadians have

¹ Pp. xviii–xix. Colen had just returned from England to resume his position as Chief Factor at York Factory.

² The third Company ship in succession to be named *King George* was built by Messrs Randall, Gray & Brent and launched in 1781. She was 76 feet in length and 26 feet 6 inches in breadth. H.B.C. Archives Dept., 'Ships – England to York Factory, 1670–1900'.

³ John Richards succeeded to the command of the Company's *Sea Horse* [III] on the death of his father, Captain Joseph Richards, at Stromness on 19 June 1782. After having the command of the *King George* [III] from 1790–1800, John Richards was discharged on 18 February 1801 for having been concerned with smuggling furs into London and selling them privately. In 1803 he took the chartered ship *Eddystone* to Charlton Island, James Bay, where Fort St. Andrews was built for the North West Company. A.1/142, p. 31; C.4/1; A.1/48, fo. 34–34d.; A.6/16, fo. 123; F.3/2, fo. 63d.; W.S. Wallace, 'The Nor'Westers Invade the Bay' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), March 1947, pp. 33–4; and A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870–71* (London, [1939]), p. 521 *et seq.*

⁴ See p. 9, n. 5.

built a house at Basqueah¹ where they will intercept all the Bungees. Have sent Mr James Swain as you have no proper person to take charge of Buckingham House, but in this respect you are the best judge. Wishing an early sight of you in the spring, I remain dear Sir your humble servant, George Sutherland.

James Swain to William Tomison

Buckingham House

19 November 1795

Sir, I received your kind favour dated the 12th instant² on the 16th and was sorry to find your goods run so short, which is very much the case here.

Sir, there being no proper appointed person as Master of this place, Mr Sutherland thought proper to appoint me as such; (to which I would wish to have your consent) should it meet with your approbation, and my future exertions for the Company's interest, I hope will recompense them for their early trust in me.

I have sent by your men all the smiths and coopers tools you wrote for, as also all the old files for fire-steels, and would be glad if you would send some down the first conveyance as there is none in the house at present. As to John Budge he was not able to come from Cumberland House; I have sent Oman Norquoy to assist up with the things.

There being no tailor at this place obliges my writing to you for captains clothing; as to orris lace I would send you some but there is none here and none came up with packet³ except some epaulets which are at the Steep Bank yet.⁴

There being no small knives to give to an Indian obliges my taking some out of the bundles you left here. I have sent William Ritch and three men more back to fetch up the goods from the Steep Bank and I hope you'll send down two men with horses to meet them, again[st] their arrival here, as there is no horses here that is fit to go up. So conclude wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and happiness to you and all under your command. I remain your very obedient servant, James Swain.

P.S. I have enclosed an account of goods that lies at the Steep Bank.

¹ At present-day The Pas, Manitoba. See p. 46, n. 2.

² Addressed to James Spence. See p. 48.

³ The packet (i.e. letters etc.) sent from York Factory after the arrival there of the ship from England.

⁴ In the Buckingham House journal (16 and 18 November 1795) Swain referred to the 'steep Bank that lies above Hudson House'. B.24/a/3. This would be near the area where Steep Creek flows west into the Saskatchewan, viz. Township 48, Range 2, West of the Third Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 79.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

20 December 1795¹

Dear Sir, On the 27th November I received your kind favour dated 15th October which gave me pleasure to hear of your safe arrival at Cumberland House, as also of the safe arrival of the honourable Company's ship which I hope sailed again in due time.²

I have to acquaint you that Mr Swain took charge of Buckingham House on his arrival there, and it would not have been prudent of me to have countermanded your order; agreeable to Mr Colen's wish two years ago I left James Spence in charge of that settlement during my absence which duty he discharged as a faithful servant, in consequence of which I left in charge last autumn with James Gaddy for his assistant, but by three Indians just now arrived, informs me he is no more, having departed this life some time ago, which I am sorry to hear but God's will be done.

Sir, in my opinion it will be necessary for you to travel on the ice to where Mr Bird winters and from thence to embark as soon as possible for the ice and to make the greatest dispatch to get here before I leave this place, which cannot be before the latter end of May, owing to our not being able to procure birchrind last summer by the Indians dying that was employed to get it, and the hard labour here since our arrival has prevented me from getting wooden work for canoes as usual. These with other circumstances will cause a late embarkation the next season, but the above is not the only inconvenience I lay under. Shot Low India is much wanted, being the most useful article that comes to this place. I have already made an exchange of 12 dozen of the Company's buttons for ball, and as soon as I can get a ladle made I intend to convert the remainder into that article and after all I shall not be able to procure the quantity of provisions required. My neighbours trades brandy and gives powder and shot for nothing, which I am not able to do. The tobacco is little and great part of it rotten, so that the aforementioned circumstances will be the loss of trade.

During my stay at Cumberland House I was obliged to give several credits to the Bungees, which if not looked after I am afraid will be lost as was the case last year by the Canadians going to the Indians' tents and taking the skins as they were procured.

¹ This letter was received by Sutherland at Cumberland House on 14 March 1796 and copied at the end of his journal entry for that day. B.49/a/27^a.

² The *King George*, Captain John Richards, and the *Queen Charlotte*, Captain John Turner (which had first called at Churchill River), sailed from York Factory for London on 21 September 1795. C.4/1; C.1/398; C.1/1007.

Edmonton House is about 100 miles to the westward of Buckingham House,¹ it is 60 feet in length, 24 in breadth and 17 high, but have only been able to stockade the front and one side. All the wood was rafted down by water, there being no wood near where the house is erected. We have also built another house of 32 by 18 and 16 feet high.

Our trade at present is much inferior to that of last year at this time greatly owing to the small stock of brandy and no kegs to put it in. So conclude wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and happiness to you and all under your direction. I remain dear Sir your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. My best respects to the gentlemen with you.²

William Tomison to [James Swain]

Edmonton House

20 December 1795

Dear Sir, On the 27th November³ I received your kind favour, dated the 19th as also the trading goods etc. It being some time before the smith could get the forge erected, as also the tailor in making the clothing has prevented me from sending sooner.

As Mr George Sutherland had a full power to appoint you to the command of Buckingham House, far be it from me to disapprove thereof, but at the same time I hope the early trust will induce you to exert yourself for the interest of your employers which will be the only means to insure you of gaining the honourable Company's esteem.

I have sent by the bearers six captains coats, twelve small for boys, four dozen of fire-steels, eight dozen of awl blades, five dozen yew handle knives, two dozen large roach, and 4 dozen small long, and forty gun-worms. The above is all I can spare at present. Have also sent two white shirts and four checked ditto which is more than I can spare, I will be obliged to make the cotton into shirts. The trade here is very little as yet, I am obliged to do here as a poor pedlar does in England, lay by and get a skin now and then, not being able to bid up for them, my stock of goods being too small.

You are to take out those articles you mentioned in your last and send the remainder up by the bearers and if you have occasion for any of the

¹ See p. 13 and n. 2.

² On 28 October 1795 George Sutherland remarked in the Cumberland House journal that the winter complement numbered eleven. Of that number only George Sutherland, 'Second & Master'; John Wright, surgeon; Mitchel Oman, guide; and James Flett, tailor, have been identified. B.49/a/27^a, 28 October and 13 December 1795; A.30/7, fos. 31, 36, 38, 39.

³ See p. 50.

guns keep some and send the rest up. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs health and happiness to you and all under your direction and remain Sir your humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. By three Indians just now arrived I am informed that James Spence is no more which I am very sorry for but God's [will] be done.

James Bird to William Tomison

Lecorns¹

7 December 1795²

Sir, The return of Mr Shaw's men³ to Buckingham gives me an opportunity of informing you that I am much in want of cloth, having at present only about seven yards in the house; therefore should be glad if you could possibly send me a little as the want of this article will certainly occasion the others (that are here) to stay on hand, and of course the loss of the winter and spring trades. I would have sent a couple of men up to Buckingham, but fearing that you might not be able to spare any and having this opportunity of writing which I think will answer the same purpose, I declined it.

I have now about 800 beaver in the house, upwards of 400 of which have been traded since my arrival.

I should be glad if an opportunity offers if you would let me know whether it will be necessary to have canoes built here as those of last year turned out so bad. Wishing you a good trade I remain Sir your humble servant, James Bird.

¹ See note 3 below, and p. 9, n. 5. Bird's post (Carlton House) was in the region, but to the west of the old French Fort St Louis, built by Louis François de la Corne in 1753, and of the Fort à la Corne operated by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1858. Bird's post was on the north bank, old Fort St Louis on the south bank. According to information in a letter from A. S. Morton to the Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company dated 6 September 1935 (Archives Department, Fort à la Corne file), a personal investigation in the area had disproved the tradition that the Company's Fort à la Corne of 1858 occupied the same site as the Chevalier's post. The site of the old French fort was, in fact, found to be some two miles to the west, but on the same bottom or flat of the river as Fort à la Corne. See Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), II, 482-4.

² James Bird's version of this letter is copied in the Carlton House journal for outfit 1795-96, B.27/a/1, fo. 21, and dated 'Carleton House, Decr. 16 1796 [*sic*]'. It contains the additional remarks: (at the end of paragraph 1), 'Cumberland House is also very short of the aforementioned article'; (at the end of paragraph 2), 'and no dried Provisions of any kind. The Buffalo remain at a great distance from us & we are at present living on red Deer and Bulls'.

³ Angus Shaw's men had obviously been on business to Louis Chastelain at the North West Company's post (known as Fort St Louis) on the opposite side of the river to Carlton House. See Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 482-3.

James Swain to William Tomison

Buckingham House

4 January 1796

Dear Sir, I received your kind favour of the 20 ultimo on the 27th with the enclosed account of goods sent down, and was sorry to find your goods run so short as to disable you in bidding up for skins. The cloth at this place is sufficient, as the Slave Indians trades none, and I could spare you a couple of pieces, should you think proper the next opportunity. As to the liquor I am doubtful should any trade be at this place that it will run short.

I have sent by the bearers the following articles viz. two cases of guns, part of the embossed cloth (the Bungees sets their fancy on it much, obliges me keeping a part of it), a box of medicines with the keg of salt etc.

The trade here at present is nigh about 2000, I have about 400 beaver with some red foxes, the rest wolves. As to provisions, I have a good stock of fat, but the beat meat is rather short, but hope from what I'll get between this and the spring to have a sufficiency. I have at present about twelve cows in stock and hope very soon to have a sufficient quantity to serve. So conclude wishing you a pleasant winter with a good trade, I remain Sir your very humble servant, James Swain.

William Tomison to James Bird

Edmonton House

11 February 1796

Sir, Your favour of the 7th December I received on the 12th of January and I am sorry to find you are so much in want of cloth; this you should have considered when at York Factory and embarked a larger quantity as you well knew there was not enough of that or other goods sent up in the summer, and what was sent was very ill assorted. I had only one piece of blue and one piece of red common, not half the quantity of Low India shot that was the last year, tobacco not half the quantity required, no beads come up save a few white and some light blue, notwithstanding a large quantity was sent for the year before for making belts; many skins was lost last year for want of that article and more so this, no small blankets, no duffle of any kind came here. The aforementioned circumstances with some others will reduce the trade at Buckingham and Edmonton Houses. Indeed had you sent up a couple of men to

Buckingham, Mr Swain informs me he could spare one piece; and that would have been ridiculous after bringing goods so many miles inland to have it hauled back again was there a much larger quantity than what there is. As to this place there is none to spare, as I am obliged to give cloth for nothing to Indians in lieu of tobacco and shot; our trade here is very little as yet. I have got the quantity of fresh provisions required but little or no dried provisions; our canoes was much hurt before they got here, and is uncertain whether we get any built in the spring as little or no birchrind was procured last summer, occasioned by the Indians dying that were employed to get it, and the hard labour here all the fall prevented us from getting wooden work for canoes as usual. Our neighbours are now sending out liquor to every Indian they know of, but I cannot do so, for I have not a man fit to send out to an Indian, so that we are pitiful in that respect as well as many others. If you have any canoes built in the spring order them to be canoes or none at all, as you was very sensible those built last year was birchrind spoilt which was a double expense. So conclude with wishing you a plentiful spring with health to enjoy it and success to the honourable Company's affairs, I remain Sir your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

12 February 1796¹

Sir, I again must acquaint you that in my opinion it will be necessary for you to travel on the ice to where Mr Bird winters, and then to embark as soon as possible for the ice.

Should there be any shot or ball to spare at Cumberland be pleased to bring some with you, as also brandy, as in all probability there will be little or none remaining at either of the upper houses. I have only 90 lbs. of the former and 7 kegs of the latter, 3 rolls of tobacco which is not enough to give to Indians without trading any, were it all good, cloth common red and blue none. The different interests wastes a great deal of goods and those that are most able carries the whole. My small quantity and but ill assorted will not allow me to bid up, neither have I a man that is fit to send out to Indians or knows what they say. The number of useful hands that has been taken from this river and sent elsewhere, of late years, has been hurtful to the Company, and I doubt much whether they have

¹ Two men from Buckingham House delivered this letter to Sutherland at Cumberland House on 20 April 1796. Sutherland's copy of it (dated 15 February) is in the Cumberland House journal, B.49/a/27^b., fos. 20d.-21d.

enriched the Company where they have been sent,¹ more than had they been continued here; but be that as it will the Canadian company has benefited by such conduct and laugh in their sleeve to see our canoes reduced from twelve to eight which gave them an opportunity to augment four canoes to their former number the last two years of this place only. In my opinion neither of these houses² can be thrown away, so that it will be necessary for you to bring two canoes up in the spring which will enable us to get down some provisions. So conclude with wishing you a prosperous spring with health to enjoy it, I remain Sir your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. I am much obliged to you for the great quantity of sugar, tea, coffee etc. sent up last autumn; thank God for health. When I want to get merry I go to the river and when I want to drink tea I go to the bushes; I am sorry thirty-four years servitude should not deserve better treatment. A Canadian clerk has tea and sugar found him and so might I, was not the honourable Company's benevolence made abuse of.

William Tomison to James Swain

Edmonton House

15 February 1796

Sir, I received your kind favour on the 12th January with everything therein mentioned but was sorry to receive such a medicine box, the hartshorn was frozen and the best run out, and the Turlington a great quantity of which was run out, the bottle of jalap is good for nothing, being moulded and rotten. Several Indians have been at me to trade medicines, but was not able to give them what they wanted, in consequence they must go where these can be served. It is not for want of medicines sent to York that we are so ill served here.

When I received your letter I thought to have sent down long before this but have been prevented by the fewness of the men. There is several out to bring credits from Indians, four at the hunting tent, and the rest have been collecting stockades, getting fire-wood and getting meat fetched home when killed.

Should Mr Bird send up for cloth please to let him have what you can spare, though it is ridiculous to send up for cloth when so many canoes came in the fall. If you have any brandy to spare you will please to send it up by the men that comes up to fetch down furs, also please to send up

¹ Presumably Tomison had in mind the competition between York and Churchill in the Muskrat country.

² Edmonton House and Buckingham House.

those shirts that came up in the fall, four large kettles, some ink powder, one dozen of tobacco boxes and anything else that you think you will not get off; you will please to send as soon as possible. I could not spare more than one man to send down as they are busy hauling home meat, there being only half of it home as yet.

You are to make the pemmican¹ as soon as you can. I have sent down the steelyards for that purpose, every bag to be 76 lbs., and please to let me know what number of bags you will be able to make. As to what I have here is but trifling, not more than sixty bags will be wanted. So conclude wishing you a pleasant spring and health to enjoy it, with a good trade and remain your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. Please to send up some opodeldoc² as there was none in the box, also some strengthening plaster.

William Tomison to James Swain

Edmonton House

26 April 1796

Sir, I have been prevented from sending down sooner by several reasons, which was not in my power to prevent. In the first place there was no water in the river for canoes, secondly I could not procure the quantity of birchrind I wished to have sent down; there is fifteen rolls now sent which has been purchased from seven Indians, and has cost more than I can be answerable to charge. I have three men away with an Indian for these five days past and I am obliged to keep a large family at the house until their return. The water being so low prevents me from sending down some beaver to pack with your wolves. I am sorry to inform you that since Shaw's arrival here I have not received a skin in credits from several Indians by his sending out a number of men with rum to meet the Indians and debauch them from paying my credits. I was neither able to send out the number of men nor the quantity of liquor to beat up against those daring [MS: darein'd] villains that would not scruple to cut our throats were there no fur thereafter coming, which every man at this place are very sensible of.

I have no brandy but what is kept for paying for birchrind and to procure a hunter for the summer, part of a keg of powder, not a pipe of

¹ For David Thompson's description of making pemmican from 'the lean and fleshy parts of the Bison', see Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), pp. 312-13.

² 'The name given in the works of Paracelsus to medical plasters of various kinds. *Obs.*' *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Brazil tobacco in the house, and only about 30 lbs. of roll, one bag of ball. The above articles I have been very sparing of since you went from this. There is some cloth and five or six guns remaining, and there are several Indians I expect to come in if they are not intercepted. If you have any powder to spare you will send it up and return this canoe as soon as possible, as also the other three to assist in bringing down the furs. We cannot embark from this until there is more water. So conclude wishing success to the Company's affairs and remain your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

James Swain to William Tomison

Buckingham House

30 April 1796

Dear Sir, I received your kind favour dated 25th instant on the 29 ditto and was sorry to hear that your goods run so short, as also your not receiving your credits which is very much the case here.

You wrote me to send up the three canoes that was here, but I am only able to man two of them, the reason is that they refused to go up unless they had four men in each canoe, and what remains is barely sufficient to attend the canoe building. I have about forty hewed logs for building a watch house all ready to begin work upon but there being no proper person to do it they will be of no service for this year. There is one canoe finished and another on the bed. So conclude wishing you a pleasant spring with a good passage, I remain your very humble servant, James Swain.

William Tomison to James Swain

Edmonton House

2 May 1796

Sir, Three hours after I sent off the last canoe, the Indian with the three men arrived, brought ten rolls of birchrind which I have now sent. The want of men has prevented me from sending down sooner, there being no water in the river prevents me also from sending down the quantity of furs I could wish. There is upwards of 100 bundles and only three canoes here at present, and without there is a rise of water it will not be possible for us to get down full loaded. I would have sent some by land but the ground is all burnt and there is no food for horses, besides there is some very bad small rivers to cross which renders my sending by land abortive unless I was at the head of them myself. We had much difficulty in getting

the dry goods up safe last autumn by the horses falling in miry places and unable to disengage themselves until their loads were taken off. The beaver now sent is to be packed with your wolves. So conclude with wishing prosperity to the Company's affairs and remain Sir, your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. I have sent two gallons of brandy which I have bought from the men. I have only part of keg left which is too little for the demands there is for that article. Adieu, W.T.

James Swain to William Tomison

Buckingham House

30 April 1796

Copy of letter on p. 58.

William Tomison to James Swain

Edmonton House

10 May 1796

Sir, I received your kind favour dated the 30th April on the 7 instant by which I was sorry to find you was not able to send up the other canoe, the want of water in the river will distress us much, canoes not being able to carry half cargoes will induce me to send furs by land, notwithstanding they will be liable to get damaged on account of the several miry places which cannot be avoided. If no canoes is already sent, you are to send off two as fast as possible and if Mr Sutherland has arrived he is to embark with them. And if he has brought any powder or brandy up he is to bring a part with him. Shaw has played the deuce here with the Indians since he came by debauching and keeping them constantly drunk and they have been very troublesome for liquor, he has even traded the goods from the Indians they had from me to render them pitiful so that they may take credits from him in order to debauch them entirely from this house. The small quantity of brandy, tobacco and several other articles sent up is the occasion of the whole which has been the ruin of the trade for several years past; you are also to send up John Clouston's and James Morrowick's things as they stay here all summer, they are very ill off at present having nothing but what is on their back. You are to pack the furs traded since your arrival at Buckingham House, reserving some

wolves to pack with those traded before, the bundles to 76 lbs. weight. So conclude with wishing success to the honourable Company's affairs and remain your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

James Swain to William Tomison

Buckingham House

15 May 1796

Dear Sir, I received your kind favour dated 10th instant on the 15th ditto and was surprised to hear of the mean actions of the French in trading the Indians goods from them to render them pitiful. I having no order to send off canoes till the arrival of your letter today; but there is two going off tomorrow morning, I have also sent a keg of powder as yours is short.

There is four canoes off the bed, two of which is timbered up and one of them ready to go in the water. I have sent up John Flett and James Gaddy,¹ the former of which gave me some very bad language when I ordered him to go. I would have sent his brother² but our stock of meat is nigh exhausted obliges my keeping him as he being the only one at this house that can kill a beast when needed. So conclude wishing you a pleasant spring with success to the Company's affairs I remain your very humble servant, James Swain.

William Tomison to James Swain

Edmonton House

15 May 1796

Sir, on the 12 Instant I sent off ten men by land with forty bundles of furs which I wish may arrive safe. There were horses to have carried more but no men to take care of them. I have now sent three canoes with eleven in each and there still remains eighteen bundles with some other lumber. I a[m] sorry to be so long detained by the delay of those coming up which is hurtful in many respects. All the Southward Indians crossed

¹ James Gaddy, junior. See p. 38.

² Probably William Flett, since he was the only Flett on the North Saskatchewan River during 1795-96 described by Tomison as 'useful in hunting buffalo'. B.49/f/2, fo. 3. On account of the lack of many post records for season 1795-96, and there being insufficient information regarding the movements of servants in post journals where such exist, it is not always possible to identify positively the men stationed at each of the 'York Inland' posts. The alphabetical list of 'Names of the Company's Servants' for 1795-96 (A.30/7, fo. 31) includes those of Alexander, James, John, and William Flett. No mention is made of relationship, but John aged 32 years, and William, aged 30 years, both came from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands, both joined in 1782 and both would become time-expired in 1797.

to the other side yesterday to go to war, and had much to do to get a hunter but if there is not powder sent up there will be nothing to hunt with. The powder was all very good till the last cask which I was obliged to pound with a hammer and is very unfit for men's lives to depend on. So conclude wishing a speedy arrival of those from below, success to the Company's affairs, and remain your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

[*Marginal note:* This is a copy of a letter forgot to be entered in the beginning]

Carleton House

10 September 1795¹

Sir, Having but a small quantity of goods and far from being a good assortment induces me to send these few lines to inform you thereof. There is many articles wanting, but shot Low India, tobacco, brandy, and knives, are the most, and any other articles you can spare may be sent. There is not ball enough at present to trade provisions, much more furs for the honourable Company. So conclude with wishing you a happy winter and remain your most humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

¹ See p. 49, and n. 1. George Sutherland, after surrendering the care of York Factory to Joseph Colen on 28 August 1795, left for 'the upper settlements' on 5 September and on 11 October arrived at Cumberland House where he thought it 'necessary to stay in Charge' because William Tomison had returned up the Saskatchewan instead of going, as expected, to England by the ship of that year. B.239/a/97; B.49/a/27^a.

JOURNAL OF GEORGE SUTHERLAND

1796-1797

A Journal of Transactions at Edmonton House by George Sutherland 1796 & 7

1796

July 17. Left York Fort accompanied by Messrs Longmoor¹ and Hallet.² The former bound to the Red Deers³ and the latter to Jack River⁴ with sixteen canoes loaded with trading goods, three for the former, and two for the latter place, and the remaining eleven for the upper settlements. They arrived at Gordon House on the 22nd. Robert Linklater⁵ bowsman having been taken very ill with the gravel is consequently unable to proceed on the passage, we were under the necessity of engaging Edward Tomison⁶ as bowsman in his stead for three years at £16 per year as per contract now sent to the chief at York.⁷

July 24. After exchanging some part of our cargoes we proceeded on

¹ Robert Longmoor from Edinburgh, who joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a sailor in 1771, gained wide experience both at the Bay-side and inland. He and Charles Isham were the first employees to attain 'any degree of Proficiency in Bowing or Steering canoes' inland and he became the first employee 'to perfect himself in the Art of Canoe Building'. A.11/116, fos. 6d., 13d. During season 1795-96 Longmoor was Shipping Officer at York Factory, but on requesting employment inland Colen sent him to Red Deer River 'on the South Side of Lake OoWinnipeg'. A.30/7, fo. 26; B.239/a/99, 17 July 1796. For numerous references to Longmoor see J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934). Many references to him as well as the journals kept by him at Upper Hudson House and Lower Hudson House are in *H.B.R.S.*, XIV and XV.

² Henry Hallet (Hallett), born about 1777, joined the Company as a writer at £10 per annum in 1793. He came from Battersea, London, and was a nephew of Philip Turnor. In September 1795 Joseph Colen had occasion to censure Hallett for his 'Imprudences' and 'Depravities of . . . Heart' and to warn him of the consequences if he did not change his conduct. A.30/7, fo. 76; A.16/34, fo. 160; B.239/b/58, fo. 83. After Hallett was dismissed in 1810 for murdering an Indian he was employed by the North West Company until the coalition of 1821 again made him an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company for one year. See W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 453-4.

³ The Red Deer River flowing into Red Deer Lake, Manitoba. See p. xli.

⁴ Where a post was to be built to replace Apsley House on Cross Lake. See p. 96, n. 2.

⁵ Robert Linklater, 'a tolerable good Servant' from 'Birsas' (Birsay, Mainland), Orkney Islands, who had joined the Company in 1789 and whose wages were £12 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 78; B.49/f/2, fo. 4d.; A.32/6, fo. 48.

⁶ Edward Tomison, aged about 38 years, from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who joined the Company as a labourer in 1793. A.30/7, fos. 28, 83.

⁷ Joseph Colen, to whom Sutherland reported these matters by letter on the following day. Sutherland also mentioned that Indians had reported 'the Frenchmen having left the Jack River & . . . now building a house at the side pines' near the York Factory Homeguard Indians. If the report proved true Hallett was instructed to build there also. B.239/b/58, fo. 110.

the voyage and got to the Jack River¹ on the 10th of August where we pointed out a proper spot for Mr Hallet to build a house on near one occupied by the Canadians.²

Sent one canoe to the Cross Lake to bring the Company's property and men from that place, but the season being far advanced and my distance to the upper settlement being very great, I could not wait Mr Tate's³ arrival but have left Mr Longmoor to settle matters with Mr Tate's men and I proceeded on the voyage to Cumberland, where we reached the 25th August,⁴ where we stayed five days packing and repacking bundles and leaving an assortment of trading goods at this place, also delivered Mr Bird an assortment for Carlton House.⁵

August 30. Left Cumberland with ten canoes for Buckingham House, as also Mr Bird with two canoes for Carleton. Mr Fidler remains in charge of Cumberland⁶ till the arrival of the fall canoes from the Factory, when he will proceed to take charge of Buckingham. We came to Carleton

¹ One of the people in Sutherland's party so far was Joseph Le Rocher who had made at least two attempts whilst at York Factory to avenge the death of Robert Thomson (Thompson), the North West Company proprietor. Le Rocher was left with Hallett who surrendered him to the North Wester, William McKay, at Jack River on 25 September. B.154/a/1, fos. 6d., 26; B.239/b/59, fo. 35.

² For a copy of Sutherland's letter of 10 August to Colen reporting the slow progress made on the journey inland because of winds and rain, see B.239/b/58, fo. 114d. In his 'Journal from York Fort ... up the Saskatchewan River ... in 1792' (E.3/1, fo. 79d.) revised at a later date, Fidler remarked that after travelling through 'the Play Green Lake or Boos coose cag gan' he 'Went up Jack River, but no current in it - it is only a passage between Islands - & there are 2 more to the Northwards of it which run parallel with this about 2 Miles off - SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$ - S $\frac{1}{2}$ - SSW $\frac{1}{2}$ a river fall in here from the East side, that falls out of a Lake 2 days journey in Canoes ... SWbW $\frac{1}{2}$ - WSW $\frac{1}{2}$ - SW $\frac{1}{2}$ - W $\frac{1}{2}$ - SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{1}{2}$ & again came into the same Lake [present Playgreen Lake] we have lately left - to keep to the Northwards along the Lake all the way is a good deal out of the way - River rocky sides, intermixt with Grass - low, from 50 to 80 yds wide - Mr Hallett built here 1796 near the upper end of it on North side & Mr Isham succeeded him & remained 2 years more here, a plentiful place for Surgeon & Tickameg'. Cf. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-5.

³ James Tate, master and trader, at Cross Lake post during 1795-96. He was from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and had joined the Company in 1773. In 1796 he was 37 years of age and receiving a wage of £40 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 38.

⁴ In his Cumberland House journal Fidler dated Sutherland's arrival as Wednesday, 24 August. Nothing unusual had happened at Cumberland House since Tomison's departure. Roderick McKenzie of the North West Company had arrived at Cumberland Lake on 17 August en route to Lake Athabasca. He had been only seventeen days on the journey from Rainy Lake. Messrs Finlay, Leveson, McKay and Stewart with sixteen canoes had passed on their way to Great Slave Lake and the Athabasca country. According to Fidler this was 'the earliest arrival here [Cumberland] ever since their settling in that Quarter'. Mr Portee [Porter], the Canadian master at Cumberland, also left 'for the Northwd.'. B.49/a/27^b.

⁵ During the time he was at Cumberland House Sutherland saw the arrival of Messrs Simon Fraser, Alexander Fraser 'and McGilvery a young man' en route 'for the Isle a la Crosse & the Musk rat river'. B.49/a/27^b, 28-29 August 1796.

⁶ With Fidler were: James Flet(t) (tailor), George Munro (Monro), Robert Yorston and John Ballenden [3rd], ('a young hand now come up'). B.49/a/27^b. The winter complement at Cumberland House, according to Fidler, included: Mitchel Oman, Magnus Twatt, Edward Brown, Henry Budge, James Flett, William Haukland (Hawkland), and James Sutherland [2nd]. *Ibid.*, fo. 57; also A.30/7 [1796-]1797.

House¹ on the 7 September where we stayed one day, and set out upwards. On the 13 we met one man and three horses from Buckingham where I left the canoes and went on horseback along shore and put up with the canoes every night, found plenty of buffalo all the way so that our men had plenty of fresh meat.

September 26. We arrived at Buckingham House where we found all well except a few horses stolen by the Stone Indians in the course of the summer. The day after our arrival Mr Shaw with eighteen canoes loaded with trading goods belonging to the Canadian Company arrived here.²

September 27. Employed opening and leaving an assortment of goods at this place, leaving James Gaddy still in charge of the house till the arrival of the fall canoes.³

September 29. Dispatched six canoes with brandy, powder, guns etc. to Edmonton House, also myself with six men and a number of horses carrying dry goods to the same place, where I arrived on the 3rd of October where I found all well, and every[thing] in very good order.⁴ The Stone Indians also stole some horses from this house in the summer. I found 400 beaver and some dry provisions traded by Alexander Flett in the absence of the canoes.

October 4, Tuesday. Wind S clear fine weather. Men at the house clearing the warehouses etc. In the afternoon six canoes arrived from Buckingham. A band of Muddy River Indians came in.

October 5, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians

¹ The winter complement at Carlton House ('Nippowee') according to Fidler, included: Mr [James] Bird, John Ballenden [1st], John Brough, James Gaddy [junior], John Halcro, George Munro (Monro), James Park, James Sandison, John Stickler (Strickler), James Scott, Edward Tomison, James Walters, and Robert Yorston. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 57; also A.30/7 [1796-]1797.

² Messrs 'Shaw, McDonald, McGilvery, Cammel, & King' had arrived at Cumberland House late on 30 August. With them were Peter Sabbeston, senior, and John (Jack) Ward, deserters from the Hudson's Bay Company. On 1 September Shaw, as he had promised, returned Sabbeston to the Company at Cumberland House. B.49/a/27^b. Colen had requested the surrender of both men in accordance with a verbal agreement made in London some time during 1794-95 between himself and Simon McTavish. Both parties undertook not to engage men already under contract with the rival concern. B.239/b/58, fo. 103-103d.

³ Fidler, accompanied by sixteen men in four canoes loaded with forty-two pieces of goods, nine cases of guns, eight bags of ball, etc., left Cumberland House on 27 September 1796. He passed 'the Nippowee' on 1 October, spent most of 3 October 'at Mr Birds' [Carlton House], and arrived at Buckingham House on 20 October. The winter complement at Buckingham House included: Peter Fidler, James Gaddy [senior], Gilbert Laughton, Nicol Allen (Allan), John Ballenden [3rd], Magnus Chambers, James Davey, John Davey, John Forbest, John Flett, William Flett, John Linkletter (Linklater, ? junior), Thomas Isbester (Isbister), William Isbester (Isbister), Laughton Leith (Leigh), Donald Mowatt, John Mowatt, John Irvin(e), William Park, William Rich (Ritch), Peter Sabeston [junior], Magnus Spence [1st], George Spence (Spence), William Sinclair [3rd or 4th], Nicol Spence, James Ross, William Tomison [labourer], John Moore (Moar), Magnus Yorston. B.49/a/27^b; also A.30/7, [1796-]1797.

⁴ For the names of the men wintering with Sutherland, see p. xl, n. 1.

of yesterday went away. Men employed as before. The canoe men resting themselves.

October 6, Thursday. Wind NW clear weather. Sent seven men in two canoes loaded with bark. Indians all drunk at the house. Men employed as before.

October 7, Friday. A strong breeze SE clear weather. Some of the Indians went away and others arrived. Men employed as yesterday.

October 8, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians trading. Men employed as before. Sent three men down to Buckingham House on horseback.

October 9, Sunday. A light breeze northerly clear weather. Some of the Indians went away.

October 10, Monday. A small breeze SW clear cold weather. Men employed laying up the canoes and getting hay home. The canoe men have all gone to do duty. This day I opened the last of the goods brought from York Fort, and I have the satisfaction to say I have not found the least article damaged, a proof that your honours servants are exceedingly careful of the property committed to their charge. Indians taking debt and part going away.

October 11, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed getting hay home and the carpenter stocking tools. Most part of the Indians went away.

October 12, Wednesday. A light breeze NW cloudy weather. Having no provisions in the house sent three men with horses to hunt buffalo. Two men at the pit-saw and the rest cutting down stockades to enlarge the yard and gardens etc. Some Indians arrived and others went away.

October 13, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went to hunt buffalo yesterday arrived with the flesh of two bulls. The rest employed as yesterday, some Indians going away.

October 14, Friday. A fresh breeze NE clear sharp weather with snow last night. Two men at the pit-saw, the rest cutting down stockades. Indians trading and going away.

October 15, Saturday. Wind northerly clear sharp weather. Men employed as yesterday. Several Indians arrived, brought very little with them.

October 16, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Part of the Indians of yesterday went away.

October 17, Monday. Wind variable cloudy cold weather. Men employed as on Saturday. In the afternoon four men arrived in a canoe from Buckingham House with trading goods etc. Some Indians pitched away and some arrived.

October 18, Tuesday. A light breeze southerly clear fine weather. The

canoe of yesterday returned to Buckingham House. Men employed as before. The last of the Indians pitched away.

October 19, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

October 20, Thursday. A light breeze NW clear weather. Men employed as before.

To Mr James Bird. Dear Sir, I received your favour¹ by the Canadians a few days ago, am very glad to hear your neighbours² does not intend building another house this season. By this means you will be able to send me a good many more men in the spring to assist down with the boats and canoes and in case I should not have another opportunity I wish you to send as many men as you can spare as soon as possible after the river breaks. Send up at the same time all the trading goods remaining except what will be necessary to procure bark and provisions in the summer. If there should be any spare goods at Cumberland House use your best endeavors to get it sent up also as I will be short of many articles here especially ball.

I arrived here on the 3rd instant and have traded upwards of 1000 beaver in furs, some of which are but of a very indifferent quality but I was forced to take them.

The reason I did not write you when I sent you the horse in the fall was as follows. Mr Shaw overtook me at the Crossing Place and told me that some of Mr Finley's men were to return that day and asked me if I had any commands to you. I told [him] I wished to send a horse to you by his people which he readily agreed to but at this time our canoes were about ten miles on head. Consequently I had neither pen or paper. All the news I had to tell you was that the Stone Indians had been lurking about Buckingham House all the summer and in the end stole some horses. Two of the Stone Indians have been killed by the Sutherd Indians in the very act of carrying off the horses belonging both houses. A Frenchman also shot a Suther'd Indian in the pious act of taking away a few horses which did not belong to him. As there are several of your Branch Indians come to hunt in this part of the country and I make no doubt but many of them are your debtors I wish you to send me a

¹ Neither the original nor a copy of this 'favour' has been found, but it had apparently been brought by the twelve Canadians in two canoes loaded with trading goods who had left the opposition post to Bird's Carlton House 'for the upper Settlements' on 21 September. B.27/a/2.

² The North West Company wintering partner in opposition to James Bird at Carlton House was James Finlay. B.49/a/27^b, 7-9, 12 September 1796. For a biographical note on James Finlay (1766-1830), see Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

list thereof that I may stop payment of at least part of them. I am glad to hear you have got a good quantity of bark. Therefore build as many canoes as you possibly can. Let them be between the large and small size, that is canoes that two men can take down and three up.

Collect as much pitch as you can as the boats will require a great deal of that article. Wishing you a plentiful winter and a good trade, I remain dear Sir your obedient humble servant G.S.¹

To Mr Robert Longmoor. Dear Sir, Mr Shaw's men going your way² gives me an opportunity of informing you that we are well here. I arrived at this place the 3 instant on horseback from Buckingham House and our canoes came the next day. I found all safe except some horses that were stolen by the Stone Indians in the course of the summer. Since my arrival here I have traded upwards of 1000 beaver in furs a part of which is but of a very indifferent quality but I was obliged to trade it in order to get the goods bye and bye.

Provisions have been hitherto very scarce owing to the Indians being continually drinking. So much for this place. They had a very disagreeable and I may add a very dangerous summer at Buckingham, the Stone Indians having lurked about the whole season with an intention as is supposed of attacking the houses but their courage failed them: they were satisfied with stealing a few horses which cost two of them their lives having been shot by the Suther'd Indians who detected them. A Suther'd Indian was also shot by a Canadian in the pious act of helping himself to a few horses that were not his own.

There were some bark got here in the summer but not enough to build the number of canoes wanted. Therefore I hope you will use your best endeavours in getting a few built at the Red Deers River. Dispatch your canoes for Gordon House as soon as the navigation will permit in the spring and not wait for us as have been the case for some years back. By this means your men and canoes will be able to meet the boats at the head of Trout River with a cargo of goods from Gordon House. The men cannot and must not make any objections to this order, as there is trip money allowed by the honourable Company.

¹ Bird received this letter at Carlton House on 9 November and copied it into his journal under that date. B.27/a/2.

² Longmoor did not go to Red Deer River, as instructed. See p. 63. Instead, he and Charles Thomas Isham wintered at Carlton House (Assiniboine River) and Swan River House. Longmoor did not refer to this letter in his journal, B.28/a/3.

I told you before and I now repeat it that officers are not to be permitted to go down to York as usual, as it puts the honourable Company to a great expense annually, but to indent for those articles they may stand in need of which Mr Colen promises to supply them with. Wishing you a plentiful winter and a good trade, I am dear Sir your obedient humble servant G.S.
P.S. Give my compliments to Mr Isham.¹

October 21, Friday. Wind NW clear weather. The men employed as before. Ice driving in the river.

October 22, Saturday. Wind the same cloudy weather. Men getting firewood.

October 23, Sunday. A light breeze southerly cloudy weather.

October 24, Monday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Men employed getting birch for sleds. This day engaged an Indian to kill provisions for the winter. At the same time paid off the Indians who found the house in provisions all summer.

October 25, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed falling timber. The hunter and three men pitched away. The summer hunter also went away to kill beaver.

October 26, Wednesday. A light breeze southerly clear weather. Men employed as before. Three men² arrived from Buckingham House with the packet.

From Mr Colen to GS. August 25, 1796.³ Sir, The arrival of the *King George*, Captain Richards, the 20th instant enables me to dispatch all the canoes which returned from Cumberland House. Mr Oman will deliver you the invoice of goods taken from hence and Mr Whitford⁴ [h]as orders to send an account of articles that shall be taken from the stores at Gordon House.

¹ Charles Thomas Isham or, as he was also known, Charles Price Isham, was the half-breed son of James Isham, author of the first 'Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1743'. Just over two years after the death of his father in 1761, young Isham was sent to England to be educated. See *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. XII, E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, editors, *James Isham's Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1743 and Notes and Observations on a Book entitled A Voyage to Hudson's Bay in the Dobbs Galley, 1749* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1949, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1949). In 1766 Charles Isham returned to Rupert's Land as a Company apprentice and in 1796 was listed as being a trader at £60 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 77. For a biographical note and other references to Charles Isham, see Tyrrell, *op. cit.*

² John Paplay, Alexander Gun and James Folster, who had been sent by Peter Fidler from Buckingham House on 22 October. The first two were to remain at Edmonton House, but Folster was to return. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 22d.

³ Colen's copy of this letter is in B.239/b/58, fos. 116d.-117.

⁴ James Peter Whitford, from the parish of St Paul's, London, joined the Company in 1788 and during season 1796-97 was master at Gordon House at £30 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 83.

Only 100 yards of vitry¹ sent out this season, out of which Mr Oman has had a tent made. No raven duck² to be purchased. What we shall do for tents next summer I know not. All kinds of merchandise as well as provisions are considerably advanced in England and our indents are curtailed in consequence.³ I advise you to be as frugal as possible in your expenditures as you cannot be supplied next year with many things much called for inland. We have neither oatmeal, Scotch barley, rice, lard, molasses, prunes, raisins, rum or suet sent us, only half the usual quantity of butter and porter, no more than forty-two rundlets of flour, and not two-thirds of the quantity of sugar as was taken inland this season by you and other officers. Of the latter article you know, there was none in the house when you left York. We are also deprived of the usual quantity of tea. Upon the whole I am fearful we shall experience want before your arrival, to avoid which I shall send several of the men home without any cause or complaint against them but to prevent it.⁴

Our being curtailed so very considerably originated from the large stock on remains in York Fort books which on examination were balanced from the stewards; to clear this business the remains as taken by Mr Longmoor and himself August 1 '95 have been produced to the Company's new officer, Mr Jarvis⁵ who is appointed Inspector. These remains differ very widely from what were entered in account book sent home. In the article of Scotch barley alone the deficiency is upwards of lbs. 2600 and other articles in proportion.⁶

¹ A kind of light durable canvas. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

² A kind of canvas. *Ibid*.

³ Costs had risen on account of the war with France. Also a threat of famine had followed a series of poor harvests and the Act (35 Geo.III, C.119), passed in June 1795, prohibiting 'for a limited Time, the making of Low Wines or Spirits from Wheat, Barley, Malt, or any other Sort of Grain, or from any Meal, Flour, or Bran . . .' had not only been continued on 24 December (36 Geo.III, C.20) for a further limited period, but had been extended to include molasses, sugar and potatoes. As a result all indents from the Bay for spirits were not only reduced by two-thirds, but molasses spirit costing four times as much as in the preceding year, was substituted for English brandy which had become unobtainable at any price, and the Committee enquired about the possibility of extending the distilling operations at the factories to include the use of molasses. A.6/16, p. 22 *et seq*.

⁴ The Governor and Committee saw a copy of the letter to Sutherland in the York Factory correspondence book (B.239/b/57, fo. 44-44d.) sent to England in 1796 and in their letter to Colen and the York Factory council of 31 May 1797 (p. lvii) took him to task for his 'capricious humour' in 'wantonly sending Home Men without any Cause', especially at a time when recruitment was so difficult. A.6/16, pp. 56-7.

⁵ Edward Jarvis. See p. lvii.

⁶ The steward's unchecked figures sent to England in 1795 showed a non-existent surplus of between six and seven tons. B.239/b/58, fos. 116, 117, 126-27d. The cuts in the indent made by the

All the articles requested, you will I hope receive as per invoice. Those you wish to be conveyed to Gordon House next spring shall be sent. As John Moor¹ is strongly recommended to me as a good boat builder he accompanies Mr Oman. You will therefore employ him with Nicholas Spence² in building such boats as will suit the rivers in which they are to be navigated.

I expect to have a large assortment of goods at Gordon House against your arrival next summer.

The honourable Committee disapproves of so many officers coming to the Factory, you are therefore in future to prevent their coming down.

You will herewith receive all letters from Europe which will inform you how affairs [MS: officers] are situated in that quarter.

And let me impress on your mind the Committee's determination of this season, that is, only by an increase of returns the Company will in future give encouragement to their servants. They are much disappointed at the small trade from York last year, 32,000 made beaver, but are highly pleased at the exertions of the officers from Churchill who sent little better than 5000 made beaver.³

I remain with wishing you all manner of happiness and success to the honourable Company's concerns yours etc. J.C.

October 27, Thursday. Wind NW clear fine weather. Men employed as before. A Suther'd Indian arrived with a few furs.

October 28, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

October 29, Saturday. Wind variable clear fine weather. Mr Sutherland

Committee in 1796 amounted to 21½ tons of the 1795–96 consumption of provisions and there were ten extra men to feed. The effect was not felt immediately inland but at York it became necessary to introduce rationing by 19 November. The situation there was aggravated by a shortage of gunpowder and game. Towards the end of season 1796–97 Colen warned the inland officers to refit from the stocks at Gordon House and to employ the men in making two trips from there to Jack River post or one trip to Cumberland House before allowing those due to return to England to come down to York. This would help to save food for the men navigating the canoes. B.239/b/58, fos. 126d., 129d. James Smith, the steward, 'sensible of the Distresses he had occasioned took it much to heart, it affected him so as to bring on a Disorder that carried him off the 21st of April last [1797]'. B.239/b/66, fo. 2d.

¹ John Moor (Moar), from Stromness, Orkney Islands, had arrived at York in the previous August. He was about 34 years of age and had joined the Company for three years as a boatbuilder at £25 per annum. A.30/7, fo. 79.

² Nicholas Spence (also from Stromness), aged about 31 years, had engaged in 1793 as a boatbuilder for three years at £25 per annum. On the renewal of his contract in 1796 he was allowed £36 per annum. A.30/7, fos. 27, 81; A.32/8, fo. 49.

³ The Governor and Committee took offence at this remark and sharply reminded him in their letter of 31 May 1797 (p. lvii) that as it was the expenses of each factory which counted, Churchill was proportionally more productive than York. A.6/16, p. 56.

and two men set off for Buckingham House.¹ Four men getting pitch, the rest as before.

October 30, Sunday. A light breeze SW clear fine weather. Three Sussew Indians arrived with a few furs and went away in the evening.

October 31, Monday. Wind and weather the same. Three men went to fetch meat from the hunter and arrived in the evening with the flesh of two moose and two bulls. The rest peeling stockades etc.

November 1, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as yesterday. A few Muddy River Indians arrived, brought very little with them.

November 2, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather. Men employed as before.

November 3, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same. Some of the Muddy River Indians went away. The hunter arrived to go across the river to hunt.

November 4, Friday. A light breeze westerly clear fine weather. The hunter pitched away across the river. Part of the men cutting firewood, the rest as before.

November 5, Saturday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Men employed as yesterday.

November 6, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

November 7, Monday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as on Saturday. Mr Sutherland and three men² arrived from Buckingham House.

November 8, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW part and part cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

November 9, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday with snow in the afternoon. Six men went for meat, the rest as before.

November 10, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of seven buffalo, the rest as before.

November 11, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Part of the men getting firewood, the rest variously employed. Some Blood Indians arrived, brought little or nothing with them.

November 12, Saturday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. The river ice set fast opposite to the house.

¹ He arrived there at 2 p.m. on 1 November and left on the 4th taking blankets, ice chisels, etc. B.24/a/4; B.49/a/27^b, fo. 25.

² In his rough Buckingham House journal for 1796-97, which is bound with his rough Cumberland House journal for the summer of 1796 (p. xxxvii), Fidler named the extra man as George Gun.

November 13, Sunday. A light breeze SW clear weather.

November 14, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Three men at the pit-saw, the rest getting firewood.

November 15, Tuesday. A fresh breeze SE cloudy weather. Men employed the same. Six men arrived from Buckingham House.¹

November 16, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed the same. Six men arrived from Buckingham House.²

November 17, Thursday. Wind NW cloudy weather with snow. Men employed as before.

November 18, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Some of the men hauling firewood, the rest as before. Two Sussew Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

November 19, Saturday. Wind and weather the same. The Indians of yesterday went away. The men employed as before.

November 20, Sunday. Wind the same clear sharp weather.

November 21, Monday. A light breeze SW with small snow. Part of the men hauling and cutting firewood, the rest as before.

November 22, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as yesterday.

November 23, Wednesday. A light breeze southerly clear weather. Sent five men to Buckingham House.³ Men employed as before.

November 24, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

November 25, Friday. Wind SW clear thawing weather. Men employed as before. This morning a tribe of Blood Indians came in, brought a few wolves but no provisions – and in the evening a large tribe of Fall Indians arrived for a supply of tobacco etc., they brought a few wolves.

November 26, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. Part of the Indians of yesterday went away.

November 27, Sunday. Wind easterly cloudy weather. A Suther'd Indian arrived for a supply of tobacco.

November 28, Monday. A fresh breeze NW clear cold weather. Sent three men with the Indian of yesterday to fetch the flesh of two red deer, also a man from the hunter tent arrived for men to fetch meat from the tent. The rest of the men employed as on Saturday.

¹ They had left Buckingham House on 11 November to get the armourer's stores. Three of the men were to remain at Edmonton House. B.24/a/4.

² As the Buckingham House journal (B.24/a/4) does not mention two parties of six men leaving within a space of days this last sentence was apparently copied in error.

³ Three Buckingham House men were returning accompanied by Robert Garrock and Thomas Loutit. They reached that place on 27 November. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 29, 29d.

November 29, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with the flesh of two red deer, also four men went to the hunter tent to fetch meat. The rest employed as before. In the evening some Blood and Fall Indians arrived, brought a few wolves.

November 30, Wednesday. Wind variable clear fine thawing weather. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with [the flesh] of seven bulls. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. Men employed as before.

December 1, Thursday. Wind S clear fine weather. Two men at the pit-saw, tailor at work for trade, one making kegs, carpenter laying floors, the rest cutting down and collecting firewood.

December 2, Friday. Wind variable clear fine weather. Men employed as yesterday. One man arrived from the hunter's tent for men to fetch meat.

December 3, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent five men and sixteen horses to the hunter's tent to fetch meat. The rest employed as before. A few Suther'd Indians came in with a tolerable trade.

December 4, Sunday. Wind E cloudy warm weather. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with the flesh of four buffaloes. The rest as before. Two men arrived from Buckingham House.¹

December 5, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen as before. The rest cutting down and collecting timber. The Indians of Saturday traded and went away. A number of Blackfoot arrived brought a few furs and some provisions.

December 6, Tuesday. Clear calm warm weather. Men employed as yesterday. Indians all drinking.

December 7, Wednesday. A light breeze SW clear fine weather. The Indians of Monday went away. Men employed as before.

December 8, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent four men with twelve horses for meat. The rest as before.

December 9, Friday. Wind NW cloudy thawing weather. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of two bulls. The rest of the men as yesterday. In the evening a large tribe of Blackfoot Indians came in, brought a number of wolves and some provisions.

December 10, Saturday. Wind variable cloudy warm weather. Men employed cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. Indians trading.

December 11, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of Friday went away. Two Suther'd Indians arrived for a supply of tobacco and powder etc.

¹ Robert Garrock and Thomas Loutit. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 29d.

December 12, Monday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Four men looking for horses, the rest tying up furs and cutting firewood. The Indians of yesterday went away.

December 13, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday with rain all day. Sent four men with ten horses to Buckingham House for trading goods.¹ The rest as yesterday.

December 14, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday which is very singular at this season of the year, the rain having exhausted all the snow. A large tribe upwards of 400 of Fall Indians arrived, they appeared to have a number of wolves and some provisions. Men guarding the gates and warehouse.

December 15, Thursday. A strong breeze NW with snow all day. Men employed as yesterday. Traded with most part of the Indians of yesterday.

December 16, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. Finished trading with the Fall Indians, these being the nation who plundered Manchester House² in 1793 and attacked and burnt the South Branch and killed three of your honours servants there in the summer 1794³ and have not visited any of your honours' settlements since that time till now.

¹ They arrived at Buckingham House on 18 December with a letter dated 12 December from George Sutherland to Peter Fidler saying, 'Since my last a number of Slave Indians have been in here with Furs & Provisions which has reduced my stock of many articles of Trading Goods, particularly Guns, Hatchets & Ball – of the two former articles not one in the House and of the latter only half a bag. This has obliged me to send down sooner than I intended for a supply, as p. list inclosed. The Buffalo are still very scarce, the few our hunter kills are very poor, being chiefly Bulls. Mr Shaw & myself have told the Blackfoot tribe, not to bring their Wolves & Provisions here, but carry them down to Buckingham where Goods are left for them – we even told them that if they came here, they should not have the value of a Pipe of Tobacco, their answer was – that they were afraid of the Stone Indians who are pounding Buffalo in the road – they add that they intend going to War against the above Indians next Spring, its needless to say I endeavoured to diswade them from this barbarous expedition – I have therefore very little hopes of your having a great trade at Buckingham. I beg you will pay every attention to gett the Boats forwards. Trade here at present upwds. of 4000 MBr . . . P.S. Have sent 3 Gun Locks to be repaired by Gilbert Laughton – which I wish you to send up by the Men I also wish Gilbert to make a Ladle as I intend converting some shot into Ball.' B.24/a/4.

² See p. 11, n. 1. The news was brought to Buckingham House on 22 October 1793 by Robert Linklater, according to whom Manchester House and its inmates were robbed and stripped of everything by a body of Fall Indians 'who came to the Houses on pretence to trade having Sent for tobacco 3 Days before; they began on the Canadians [at Pine Island Fort] first & took a number of Horses & strip't many of their Men Suppose they were 40 in Number, the Branch and Swan River Indians has been the Cause of this Robbery these with a Band of Stone Indians fell on them last summer and killed 2 of their old Men & 150 Women & Children afterwards fled into the Woods'. B.24/a/2. See also *supra*, p. xvii, n. 1.

³ In the summer of 1794 Tomison placed the steersman Magnus Annel (or Annal), earning £20 per annum, in charge of South Branch House because he had had more experience than Cornelius Van Driel, who was listed as a trader at £50 per annum. B.24/a/2, 24 May 1794; B.205/a/8, 25 May 1794; A.30/6, fos. 24, 34. With Annel and Van Driel were James Gaddy, junior, and William Fea (canoemen), and Hugh Brough (labourer). Louis Chastelain was in charge of the North West Company's South Branch House at this time. B.239/b/58, fo. 37d.; B.49/f/1, fos. 2d., 7d. The attack on the Hudson's Bay Company's post by some 200 Indians, which began by their setting fire to the stockades, took place on Tuesday, 24 June, when Gaddy was out getting birchrind, Annel on a visit to the Nor' Westers'

I thought it absolutely necessary to let them know we had not forgot that horrid affair by giving them severe reprimand but to give this the more weight I begged Mr Shaw the Canadian Master with all his officers to be present which he very readily agreed to.¹ When after we had collected as many of the principal men as the room could, we told them through an interpreter that we had not forgot their past conduct and we now had them in our powers and did not want the means of punishing them effectually.

But that we would forgive them this time if they made proper acknowledgement and promise never to be even so much as impertinent to Europeans in future, to which they all agreed and seemed thankful to us for our lenity; and to convince us they were sincere they brought me in three horses and a few wolves skins with the same number to Mr Shaw in order to make peace with us, which we have concluded accordingly and they all went away.

But here I solemnly declare that if they or any other tribe of Indians should again attack any of the honourable Company's settlements while I have the honour of being Inland Master, I will take such effectual revenge as will perhaps for ever deter them from committing the like, unless I should receive a contrary order from the honourable Committee next year which I have no reason to expect.

I will here beg leave to observe that my sole view in wishing to reduce the Indians to a sense of their duty is no more or less for the good of your honours' service. As it's well known to all those who understand the customs and manners of Indians that the oftener they escape with impunity the more daring they grow, and I am of opinion this will hold good with respect to cowards and savage people.

December 17, Saturday. Wind northerly cloudy sharp weather. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard.

fort, and Brough getting the horses. Annel and Brough were killed about two or three miles away from the fort, and Fea, with Annel's Stone Indian wife and two youngest children, was brutally murdered in the house. Another woman and three children were made prisoners. Van Driel managed to hide and then made his escape to a Canadian house 'at the Nippeway', where he arrived two days later. On 6 July following, after abandoning his post, Chastelain and his people also arrived at 'Nippeway'. He told Van Driel that the same Gros Ventres followed up their attack by another on the same day on his South Branch House where he then was with four Canadians and three 'southern' Indians. According to Van Driel, the Indians could not get so close to Chastelain's house as to the Hudson's Bay Company's (which was surrounded by not-too-reliable stockades), because it was situated 'on a level spot, well stockaded, Bastions at the opposite corners, with Ball proof log houses over each gateway, raised 10 or 12 feet from the ground'. The Indians retreated after the North Westers had killed five and wounded nine others. A.11/117, fos. 163-5, 'YF J. C. Van Driel's Narrative'; and F.3/1, fo. 195, Van Driel to John Fish, York Factory, 18 September 1794.

¹ Presumably these included Duncan McGillivray, James Hughes and a Mr King, who are mentioned in the rough copy of Peter Fidler's Buckingham House journal as going to the upper house (entries for 19 November, 2 and 6 December 1796). B.49/a/27^b.

December 18, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. A few Blackfoot Indians came in brought some wolves and provisions.

December 19, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. One man making kegs, three laying the upper floor of the shed, tailor at work for trade, the rest cutting firewood. The Indians of yesterday went away. One man came from the hunter tent for men to fetch meat.

December 20, Tuesday. Wind northerly cloudy cold weather with snow. Sent six men and ten horses to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest employed as yesterday.

December 21, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. This day one of our men, James Murray,¹ had the misfortune of shooting himself in the knee with his gun, very fortunately it was only loaded with powder. Yet I am fearful it will be some time before he will be able to go on duty.

December 22, Thursday. A light breeze westerly clear fine weather. The men that went for meat on Tuesday returned with the flesh of eight cows. The rest as before. A few Swampy Ground Stone Indians arrived, brought a few skins.

December 23, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday went away. Four men went to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest as before.

December 24, Saturday. A light breeze southerly clear fine warm weather. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with the flesh of six cows. The rest as before.

December 25, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Canadians brought the following letter from Mr Bird's:

Carleton House, November 28th, 1796.²

Dear Sir, You may depend upon my sending up all the men and goods that can possibly be spared from this place (and Cumberland House if the season will permit) early in the spring if I can be supplied with a steersman. The two who are here will at that time be employed building canoes, should we be able to get our birchrind safe (I have lately been informed that the mountain in which it is was on fire some time ago), and exclusive of these there is only one man

¹ James Murray (Murry) from 'Rowsa' (?Rousay), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1787. He was about 32 years of age in 1796 and listed as a steersman at £14 per annum. He was considered 'a very good Servant but Slow in motion'. B.49/f/2, fo. 5d.; A.30/7, fo. 79.

² The copy of this letter in Bird's Carlton House journal is dated 20 November. The four Canadians, according to Bird, left Carlton House on the same day. B.27/a/2. Fidler's Buckingham House journal entry for 16 December mentions the arrival late the previous night of a packet 'from Mr Finlay [Bird's North West Company opponent] out 25 Days'. The Canadians took it on to Edmonton the next day. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 31d.

here who can with any degree of propriety be trusted with a canoe.

The Indians of this place have made no fall hunt worth mentioning. I have only traded about 300 beavers since you passed and have but a poor prospect of getting anything considerable this season owing to a scarcity of beaver (of which there is a universal complaint)¹ and such a number of our traders having left this quarter, an account of whose debts I have enclosed, as also to the improvements the Canadian traders have made in the quality of their goods. A few years since, many Indians who from the great quantities of spirituous liquors given them were induced to go to the Canadians Houses, the superiority of our cloth, guns, etc. tempted to trade these articles from us; but they are now as well supplied by the Canadians. I find our guns this year very indifferent both in their locks and stocks, these are in general a dark red, and of course not much fancied by the Indians; our neighbours' guns far surpasses them in appearance.

I have at present about five or six cwt. of fat with a proportionate quantity of beat and dried meat and hope to be able to make fifteen or twenty pemmican bags in the spring. The buffalo are tolerable near us and we have the appearance of a plentiful winter for fresh meat.

Wishing you every happiness, I remain Sir your obedient humble servant James Bird.

December 26, Monday. Wind and weather the same. The men amusing themselves at football.²

¹ See p. 92.

² As most of the inmates of Edmonton House were Orkney men the football was probably played as described by Daniel Gorrie, *Summers and Winters in The Orkneys* (London, 1868), pp. 82-4, 'From time immemorial it has been the custom in Kirkwall for the inhabitants to take part in this boisterous game [football] on New Year's day. Regularly as the day recurs there is a gathering of the populace intent on preserving one curious and time-honoured custom from extinction. The game - which should have ended with the era of cockfighting - is virtually a trial of strength, of pushing and wrestling power between "up the street" and "down the street", the grand object of the belligerents being to propel the ball to one or the other end of the town. Broad Street, where the struggle commences under the shadow of St. Magnus, becomes the centre of attraction about noon-tide. Sailors and porters arrive in formidable force from the purlieu of the harbour, tradesmen gather in groups, and even hoary-headed men, feeling the old glow of combative blood in their veins, hasten to the scene of anticipated contest. At one o'clock a signal pistol-shot is fired, the ball is tossed into the air from the steps of the old cross, and around it, soon as it bumps on the ground, there immediately gathers from all sides a dense and surging crowd. The wrestling and struggling mass sways hither and thither, sometimes revolving like a maelstrom, and at other times stationary in a grim dead-lock. At intervals, the ball, as if flying for dear life, makes a spasmodic bound from the crowd; but a sudden headlong rush encloses it again, and so the struggle continues as before. For onlookers it is exciting to observe the fierce red-hot faces of the combatants, while the only appearance of good-humour

December 27, Tuesday. Wind westerly clear fine weather. Sent six men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat. Three Suther'd Indians arrived, brought a few furs and some provisions.

December 28, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men of yesterday arrived with six cows, also the men that went to Buckingham House arrived with trading goods¹ and the following letter. Sent two men to the hunter's tent for meat.

Buckingham House, December 20th 1796.²

Dear Sir, Your men arrived here all safe the 18th instant, and have sent as much trading goods as loaded the six horses (which was all they brought down) as per list enclosed. The awls, steels, worms etc. shall be made as soon as the cold weather is over, which of late has been so intense (sixty below the cypher) that the smith could not get anything made of small articles; hitherto he has been employed in repairing falling hatchets (as there was not any fit for use here) and making nails for the bateaux.

Shall pay every attention in getting the boats as fast forward as possible – one is nearly finished and the carpenters will go to the woods after Christmas to saw stuff for the other one.

Am glad to hear you have got such a trade already so early in the season and hope if your goods be sufficient to last till the spring hunt comes in it will far surpass any of the former years. There are but few Indians about this place, but by two Blackfoots now arrived they say all their countrymen will be here with their spring hunt.

We are but middlingly off for provisions, having only three weeks stock before hand, but hope the buffalo will be soon nearer us than before by reason of the severe weather that has of late prevailed.

Wishing you health and a happy new year I remain dear Sir, your obedient humble servant Peter Fidler.

P.S. The gun locks etc. shall be done as soon as possible.

December 29, Thursday. Wind E clear fine weather. The men that

displayed is a grim smile flickering fitfully across an upturned visage. . . . Heavy knock-down blows, both foul and fair, are freely given and received. The struggle seldom lasts much longer than an hour, and when the seamen and porters win the day, they place the ball, as a trophy of conquest, on the top-mast of the largest ship in the harbour. . . .

¹ In his rough Buckingham House journal (B.49/a/27^b, fo. 33) Fidler included a list of the trading goods sent to Edmonton. They were: 12 awl blades ('all we have'), 24 steels, 96 bayonets of sorts, 4 large blankets, 6 2-point blankets, 5 broad ice chisels ('all we have'), 24 hatchets, 28 3-feet guns, 11½ dozen knives of sorts, 4 3½-gallon kettles, 4 2-gallon kettles, 6 pairs yarn stockings, 2 rolls Brazil tobacco, 3 bags ball, 2 bags shot.

² Fidler's rough copy of this letter is in B.49/a/27^b, fos. 32d.-33. His fair copy is in B.24/a/4, fos. 7d.-8.

went for meat yesterday arrived with three cows. Also a tribe of Sussew Indians arrived, brought but few furs and some provisions. Sent six men to the hunter's tent for meat.

December 30, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday trading. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with the flesh of six cows.

December 31, Saturday. Wind northerly clear sharp weather. Men employed cleaning the yard. The Indians of Thursday went away. A Suther'd Indian arrived, brought a tolerable good trade.

January 1, 1797, Sunday. Wind NW clear fine weather. The Indian of yesterday traded and went away.

January 2, Monday. Wind SW clear warm weather. Men employed cutting up firewood and tying up furs.

January 3, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed the same.

Edmonton House, January 3rd '97

Dear Sir,¹ Your favour of the 28th November arrived here on Christmas Day. Am sorry your fall trade is so little but hope you will make it up in the course of the winter. Yet this is what can hardly be expected as many of your Indians are in this quarter and doing nothing but pounding buffalo.² I'll endeavour to get as much of your debts from them as possible.

¹ James Bird at Carlton House. The letter was taken to him by Canadians on 9 February 1797 and was copied in his journal (B.27/a/2) under that date. Bird replied on 19 February as follows: 'Yours of the 3rd of Janry. came to hand the 9 inst. & on the 13th I sent off a couple of Men (according to your wish) for Cumberland House; the quantity of goods these can be able to fetch will I imagine be but trivial; yet as it's probable that the Indians of this place will not come to the Houses before I can be resupplied from Cumberland I flatter myself I shall be able to send you a tolerable proportion of most of the Articles you mention; I think I may venture (Accidents excepted) to answer for your receiving three or four Kegs of Spirits as many rolls of Tobacco, six or ten Guns a Keg of Powder a few small Hatchets and a little Ball with what other Articles can possibly be spared in the Spring. I am sorry to inform you that Trade at this place continues amazingly small, not exceeding 900 MBr. nor can I even hope that it will more than equal last Year; in the Provision way (at least fresh Meat) we are more fortunate having already laid in a good Stock. The amicable manner in which you & Mr Shaw carry on the Trade at Edmonton appears enviable, particularly when contrasted with the method of conducting here. Mr Finlay seems determined to get all the Furr's he possibly can regardless of the expence he may be at in procuring them, the large quantity of Goods he brought here (according to his own Account 150 Pieces), enables & perhaps in some measure urges him to persevere in this plan. Wishing you a pleasant Spring with a continuation of the success you have experienced'. When this letter reached Sutherland is not known.

² See p. 75, n. 1. They were killing buffalo either in pounds into which they had been driven live or (after having got the animals into pounds) by forcing them to the jumps or falls over which they went to death or disablement. Fidler's 1792 eye-witness description of this form of slaughter is quoted by Richard G. Forbis in *The Old Women's Buffalo Jump, Alberta* (Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 180, Contributions to Anthropology, 1960, Part I), pp. 63-4. See also Arthur S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of The North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1929), pp. 42-4.

Trade at this place is great at this season, being about 6000 beaver. I will be very short of some articles, a list of which I have enclosed.

I wish you to send only one canoe with five or six men as we will have craft enough to carry down the furs as far as Cumberland. Your people need not be afraid of the Fall Indians as they have been in here and traded about 1000 beaver in furs with me. Mr Shaw and myself took them severely to task for their past conduct and nothing prevented us from retaliating on but the consideration of our being under the necessity of leaving but a few men inland in the summer, but to do them justice they seemed to be sensible of what they have been guilty of. They say they have been lately like wolves but promise to conduct themselves with propriety in future.

They made me a present of three horses with a few wolves and the same to Mr Shaw in order to make peace with us which we have done accordingly.

I am very glad you are likely to make twenty bags of pemmican as there are very little beat meat or fat brought in here as yet and still less at Buckingham.

I am glad to hear that a good understanding subsists between you and your neighbour Mr Finley. It's also the case here, Mr Shaw being an excellent neighbour; by this means we bring the natives to terms. A contrary conduct I am well convinced answers no end to either party. It makes the natives impertinent and by that means creates unnecessary expense to our employers.

Since the cold weather commenced the buffalo have been plenty near us and hope by this day month to have laid in our winter stock.

That equal success may attend you is the wish of, dear Sir, your obedient humble servant G.S.

January 4, Wednesday. A light breeze NW clear fine weather. The men employed as yesterday. A few Slave Indians arrived.

January 5, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. One man came from the hunter's tent for people to fetch meat. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. Men as before.

January 6, Friday. Wind SW clear warm weather. Sent six men with horses to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest as before. A few Southerd Indians arrived.

January 7, Saturday. Wind variable clear fine weather. Men at home employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. The men returned with the flesh of six cows. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 8, Sunday. Wind easterly cloudy warm weather. Some Blackfoot and Stone Indians arrived, brought a few furs and a quantity of dry provisions.

January 9, Monday. Calm clear weather. Sent seven men with horses to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest cutting firewood. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 10, Tuesday. Wind NNW clear fine weather. Men employed as yesterday. The men returned with the flesh of seven cows. James Murray who got shot on the 21st of December has now got well and gone to work.

January 11, Wednesday. Wind southerly clear warm weather. Men employed hauling firewood. Sent seven men with horses to fetch some meat.

January 12, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. The men returned with the flesh of seven cows.

January 13, Friday. Wind easterly cloudy warm weather. Sent six men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat. The rest employed as yesterday.

January 14, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men at home cutting firewood, and cleaning the yard. The men returned with the flesh of six cows. A few Sussew Indians came in in the afternoon, brought a few furs and some dry provisions.

January 15, Sunday. Wind variable clear fine weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 16, Monday. Wind NW cloudy weather with snow. Sent six men with horses to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest employed cutting up fat meat to be melted down for making pemmican for the use of the men in the summer.

January 17, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of six cows.

January 18, Wednesday. Wind E cloudy weather with snow. Sent six men to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest employed as yesterday.

January 19, Thursday. Wind and weather the same. The men that went for meat returned with the flesh of six cows. The rest employed as yesterday.

January 20, Friday. A light breeze SW clear fine warm weather. Some Muddy River Indians arrived, brought a tolerable good trade. Men employed cutting firewood.

January 21, Saturday. Wind variable clear fine weather. The Indians of yesterday went away. Men employed cleaning the yard and cutting firewood.

January 22, Sunday. Wind SE clear fine weather.

January 23, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting up and melting fat meat. Some Blood Indians arrived.

January 24, Tuesday. A light breeze SW clear fine thawing weather. The Indians of yesterday went away. Sent four men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat. The rest employed as yesterday. A Stone Indian arrived.

January 25, Wednesday. Wind variable clear fine weather. Men employed as before. The Indian of yesterday traded and went away.

January 26, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The [men] that went for meat on Tuesday returned with the flesh of four cows. Sent six more men with horses to fetch meat, the rest cutting firewood.

January 27, Friday. Wind easterly cloudy weather. Men at home employed as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of six cows. A few Blood Indians arrived.

January 28, Saturday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Sent four men with horses to the hunter's tent to fetch meat. The rest cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 29, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of four cows.

January 30, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Sent seven men with horses to fetch meat. The rest melting fat and cutting firewood.

January 31, Tuesday. Wind and weather the same. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with seven cows. Sent six more for meat. The rest as yesterday.

February 1, Wednesday. Wind westerly clear fine weather. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of six cows. Sent five more for meat. The rest as before. A Stone and Suther'd Indian arrived, brought a few skins and some provisions.

February 2, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of five cows. Sent six more for meat, the rest cutting firewood.

February 3, Friday. Wind and weather the same. The men that went for meat returned with the flesh of six cows, also sent four more to fetch meat. The rest as yesterday.

February 4, Saturday. A light breeze SW clear fine weather. The men that went for meat returned with four cows. The rest cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. A Suther'd and Stone Indian arrived, brought a tolerable good trade.

February 5, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday went away.

February 6, Monday. Wind SE clear fine thawing weather. Sent eight men with horses to the hunter's tent for meat. The rest putting snow and water in the cellar to keep the meat froze.

February 7, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of eight cows. The rest as yesterday.

February 8, Wednesday. Wind easterly clear fine weather. Sent twelve men with horses to the hunter's tent for meat the rest stowing away meat and cutting firewood. A few Blood Indians came in, brought but a very few furs.

February 9, Thursday. Calm clear fine weather. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with twelve cows as did also the hunter and men who were tenting with him, he having kill'd a sufficient quantity of provisions to last the winter. The rest of the men as before. The Indians of yesterday went away.

February 10, Friday. Wind southerly clear weather. Men employed cutting firewood.

February 11, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. A very large tribe of Muddy River Indians arrived, seemingly well gooded.

February 12, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. Indians trading.

February 13, Monday. Wind NW cloudy weather with snow. Men employed hauling firewood. The Indians traded and went away.

February 14, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed the same.

February 15, Wednesday. Wind easterly cloudy weather. Men employed hauling firewood.

February 16, Thursday. Wind variable clear fine weather. The men employed as on Tuesday.

February 17, Friday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Sent six men with twelve horses with following letter to Buckingham for trading goods etc.¹ The [rest] hauling home timber and firewood.

¹ According to Fidler, the seven (not six) men arrived at Buckingham House on Sunday, 26 February. They were: John Pruden, George Goucher, John Moore, William Leith, John Clouston, senior, John Clouston, junior, and James Morrowick. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 40d. The fair copy of Fidler's journal (B.24/a/4) merely mentions the arrival of John Pruden and six men and that the depth of snow caused the death of several horses. The rough copy, which lists the men's names also added: 'they have had a very bad Journey: the horses was so very much tired that they scarcely were able to reach the House – two they was obliged to leave not half way to this House all the birch rind and the Carryall [carriole] – there are 4 Sledges of Bark in 28 rolls – and the people Tells me that it is rendered useless by the Horses kicking it and have split it to pieces – the snow is the deepest ever known in this part of the Country for these several years past which renders it unfit for Horses to travel any distance. They slept 9 Nights on their Journey down Mr Sutherland has got his winters Stock of Provisions to last until the Canoes goes down in the spring'. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 40d.

Edmonton House, February 17, '97¹

Dear Sir, Several tribes of Indians have been in since my last, most of which have brought good trades which has reduced my trading goods very low, particularly guns, tobacco, kettles, knives and ball. I have therefore dispatched six men with twelve horses for what goods you can by any means spare, twine excepted. Indeed all the goods that came from York Fort this season into this river would have been barely sufficient to serve this house, only I make no doubt but you will be surprised when I tell you that the trade here at this early season surpasses the last years trade altogether at this place, being 10,000 made beaver. Although scarcely any of the Suther'd Indians have yet been in, I also expect a large tribe of Fall and Sussew Indians every day, and what to do for tobacco I know not having only one roll in the house. To add to this, since I have began this letter, the Blackfoot tribe have been for tobacco. According to custom this makes matters still worse. At any rate I wish you to trade no more dry provisions as we have got sufficient already to serve ourselves and to assist our fellow-servants who go to the northward.²

I have sent down all the bark for canoe building, as also a gun lock to be repaired by Gilbert³ with some pinning wire to be made into gun worms.

I beg you will return our men as soon as possible. Wishing you health and plenty, I remain dear Sir your obedient humble servant G.S.

February 18, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men as before. A tribe of Blackfoot Indians came, poorly gooded.

February 19, Sunday. Calm cloudy warm weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

February 20, Monday. Wind ESE clear warm weather. Men employed as on Saturday.

February 21, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

February 22, Wednesday. Wind N cloudy weather with snow. Men employed as before. A few Blood Indians came in, brought but little trade.

February 23, Thursday. Clear calm weather. Men employed as before.

¹ Fidler's copies (B.49/a/27^b, fo. 41, and B.24/a/4, fos. 14d.-15) are dated 16 February 1796.

² See p. 133.

³ Gilbert Laughton (see p. 13, n. 3) who is mentioned in Fidler's Buckingham House journal, B.49/a/27^b.

February 24, Friday. Weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. A tribe of Blood Indians came in, brought but few furs.

February 25, Saturday. Wind N cloudy cold weather. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

February 26, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

February 27, Monday. Wind variable clear fine weather. Men employed beating dry meat. A few Blackfoot Indians came in, brought little or nothing with them except provisions which we do not want.

February 28, Tuesday. Wind westerly blows a very hard gale. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday went away.

March 1, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. All hands making pemmican.

March 2, Thursday. Wind SE cloudy weather with snow. Men employed as yesterday and finished making our pemmican, sixty bags of 76 lbs. each. A few Souther'd Indians came for tobacco and ammunition, brought but few beaver.

March 3, Friday. Wind variable clear cold weather. Men employed cutting and collecting firewood. The Indians of yesterday went away.

March 4, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard.

March 5, Sunday. Wind SE cloudy weather with snow.

March 6, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as on Saturday.

March 7, Tuesday. Wind NW clear cold weather. Men employed cutting firewood and putting snow out of the yard.

March 8, Wednesday. Wind variable clear cold weather. Men employed hauling home stockades etc.

March 9, Thursday. Wind W clear warm weather. Men employed as yesterday.

March 10, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting down and hauling home birch to make mallets and wedges, for the beaver press. In the afternoon John Pruden and one man arrived from Buckingham House with two bundles of trading goods,¹ having left the rest of the men behind with the horses whom they think will be unable to reach this place with the remainder of the goods owing to the great depth of the snow on the river.

¹ According to Fidler's rough journal, John Pruden and George Goucher left Buckingham House on 2 March, travelling with '2 Sledges with Dogs'. They carried one bundle of cloth and some kettles. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 41d.

Buckingham House, 2nd March 1797.

Dear Sir, Your people arrived here the 26 Instant after a very tedious journey of ten days. They were necessitated to leave all the birchrind and two horses more than sixty miles from this place on account of the great depth of the snow, and it was with the greatest difficulty they got the rest of the horses down here. I should have dispatched your men back sooner but it was necessary to let the horses rest themselves a few days before they returned.

There are but very few Indians about this house (save Bungees). Therefore have sent you nearly all the trading here (except brandy and powder) as per list enclosed;¹ there is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ yd. of red corded 5 yds. of blue corded cloth and $\frac{1}{2}$ a roll of tobacco left here of those articles.

It astonished me to hear that you had made such an extraordinary trade so early in the spring which is double of what was promised there the last year at this time, and I make no doubt but you will be able to accumulate two or three thousand more if your goods be sufficient when the spring hunt comes in.

The gun locks is repaired and sent, also the broad axe with seventy steels, 100 worms and 100 awl blades.

Wishing you health and plenty, I remain dear Sir your obedient humble servant Peter Fidler.

March 11, Saturday. Wind WSW thaws much with some rain. Sent four men with eight dogs to meet and assist those from Buckingham with trading goods. Men at home cutting firewood and cleaning the yard.

March 12, Sunday. Wind easterly clear thawing weather.

March 13, Monday. A fresh gale E part clear and part cloudy weather. Two men at the pit-saw, one making kegs, tailor at work for trade. The rest hauling home timber.

March 14, Tuesday. Wind westerly clear thawing weather. Men employed as yesterday.

March 15, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed the same.

March 16, Thursday. A light breeze easterly clear weather. Men

¹ The 'Goods sent to Mr Sutherland' (entered in the margin of Fidler's rough journal opposite his copy of the letter of 2 March sent to Edmonton) lists: 53 yards of cloth, 10 blankets, 11 doz. knives, 4 pistols, 8 shirts, 11 hand pt. soosee [soosy], 18 files, 10 guns (one each of which belonged to William Rich, John Mowatt and William Flett), 5 bags ball, 2 kegs powder, 4 kegs brandy, 1 roll Brazil tobacco, 1 bale kettles, 14 japanned tobacco boxes, 6 wooden tobacco boxes, 20 horse bells, 12 dozen rings, 12 pairs yarn stockings, 1 lb. blue thread, 1 pair corduroy breeches, 1 box of small articles, 8 sashes, 12 lbs. beads, 1 quart japanned pot, 120 arrow barbs, 100 awl blades, 90 steels, 100 gunworms, 72 combs, 300 flints. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 42.

employed as yesterday. The men returned with some goods from Buckingham House.¹

March 17, Friday. Wind NNW cloudy weather. Men employed the same.

March 18, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. A tribe of Muddy River Indians came in, brought a tolerable good trade.

March 19, Sunday. Wind SW clear thawing weather.

March 20, Monday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed cutting down and squaring timber. The Indians of Saturday traded and went away.

March 21, Tuesday. A light breeze southerly clear fine weather. Men employed as yesterday. A swan seen today.

March 22, Wednesday. Wind easterly cloudy weather with thick snow. Sent two men with dogs to Buckingham House for a supply of brandy, etc.² The rest tying up furs and cleaning the yard.

March 23, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting down and hauling home firewood.

March 24, Friday. Wind NW cloudy weather with snow. The men employed as yesterday.

March 25, Saturday. Calm clear fine weather. The men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard.

March 26, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

March 27, Monday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed hauling home wood for the beaver press.

March 28, Tuesday. Wind southerly clear fine weather. Men employed peeling stockades.

March 29, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

March 30, Thursday. Wind variable clear fine weather thaws very much. Men employed as before.

March 31, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed carrying up firewood and stockades etc. Two men arrived from Buckingham House with brandy.³

¹ The remaining five Edmonton men had left Buckingham House on 3 March (when Fidler remarked that the snow was '16½ Inches Perpendicular in the Woods') with five sledges, each carrying two pieces of trading goods. Most of the horses had been left behind as their legs had been badly cut by ice on the journey to Buckingham House. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 42d.

² According to Peter Fidler's rough journal the men were Thomas Goucher and John Deering. They were accompanied by Fidler and William Isbester who had left Buckingham House on 13 March to visit Edmonton House, where they had arrived on 17 March. The two Edmonton men and Fidler, with Isbester, arrived at Buckingham House on 26 March. B.49/a/27^b.

³ Goucher and Deering had started their return journey the day after they had arrived at Buckingham House so that they could reach Edmonton before the beginning of the thaw. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 45.

April 1, Saturday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. A Suther'd Indian arrived.

April 2, Sunday. Wind NW cloudy weather with snow.

April 3, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed falling and hauling home sleepers.

April 4, Tuesday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed cutting fire[wood] etc.

April 5, Wednesday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Men variously employed.

April 6, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

April 7, Friday. Wind the same cloudy weather. Men pointing and letting stockades into the ribbons.

April 8, Saturday. Wind northerly clear weather. Men employed cutting wood and cleaning the yard.

April 9, Sunday. Wind SW clear fine thawing weather. A few Indians arrived for a supply of tobacco etc.

April 10, Monday. Calm clear hot weather. One man making kegs, carpenter working at the beaver press, the rest digging trenches for stockades and clearing the plantation. The Indians of yesterday went away.

April 11, Tuesday. Wind southerly clear fine weather. Men employed as before.

April 12, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

April 13, Thursday. Wind easterly clear fine weather. Men employed packing furs. A band of Fall Indians arrived for a supply of tobacco etc. and went away in the evening.

April 14, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

April 15, Saturday. A light breeze southerly clear fine weather. Men employed as before. A band of Blackfoot Indians arrived, brought a few wolves.

April 16, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday went away.

April 17, Monday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Men employed packing furs.

April 18, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed digging trenches for stockades. The river broke opposite the house.

April 19, Wednesday. Wind E cold weather. Men employed as yesterday.

April 20, Thursday. Wind variable clear cold weather. Men employed peeling down and cleaning stockades. A few Sussew Indians arrived, brought little or nothing with them.

April 21, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed setting up stockades. The Indians of yesterday went away.

April 22, Saturday. Wind NE cold weather. Men employed as yesterday.

April 23, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Some Souther'd Indians came in for tobacco and went away in the evening.

April 24, Monday. Wind and weather the same. Three men making gates, the rest setting up stockades. Some Souther'd Indians arrived.

Edmonton House, April 24th.

Dear Sir,¹ The backwardness of the spring will very much retard the building of canoes and consequently will occasion a late embarkation. At the same time I find it will be impossible to man our boats and canoes for York and leave a sufficient number of men to protect both houses in the summer. I have therefore determined to abandon Buckingham House this season.

Mr Shaw having a great number of spare hands intends leaving some there and offers [MS: officers] to prevent as far as in his power our house from being destroyed by the natives in our absence. You will therefore send up all the trading goods and tradesmen's stores by the boats and canoes, keeping the house stores till my arrival as I intend leaving them in the French house² during the summer.

The river ice has given way opposite the house, but remains fast both above and below yet the water fall off fast. Send up all the men with the craft except the canoe builders. I will dispatch twenty men in the four canoes here as soon as the river ice gives way with what furs and provisions they can take. If the boats are finished Nichol Spence, boatbuilder, may come up the first trip as he is to summer here, he being unfit for the passage, and John Moor goes down with the boats in case of accidents; let him keep what tools he thinks will be necessary for the passage. Send up all the plank cut for boats by the boats as that article will be difficult to get at this place. The canoes can take all the trading goods and stores. If you have any spare line for tying bundles I beg you to send it as we are short of that article here.

¹ Peter Fidler. The letter, carried by '2 Canadians . . . from Mr Shaws' reached Buckingham House on 27 April. B.49/a/27^b.

² I.e. Fort George.

The Indians have told me often of the great scarcity of beaver. Many of them have been in and brought but very few. Wishing you better success I am yours etc. G.S.

April 25, Tuesday. Wind NW clear fine weather. Men employed as yesterday.

April 26, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

April 27, Thursday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Men employed as before. A band of Sutherd Indians arrived, tolerable well gooded.

April 28, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed setting up stockades and repairing canoes.

April 29, Saturday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as yesterday. The Indians of Thursday went away.

April 30, Sunday. Wind NW cloudy weather. A band of Southerd Indians arrived, brought a tolerable good trade. The last of the river ice went past.

May 1, Monday. Wind SW clear warm weather. Twenty men preparing to go down to Buckingham House, the rest setting up stockades.

Edmonton House, May 1st.

Dear Sir, The last of the river ice past this place yesterday. I have therefore dispatch[ed] twenty men in four canoes with furs and provisions as per enclosed list, the extra men are to assist up with the craft. The water fall off very fast and the season is far advanced. I therefore hope you will dispatch all the men in the boats and canoes that can possibly be spared immediately on your receipt of this. Have sent you all the tracking lines, crocus¹ and raw pitch I had here, have also given each man four pairs of shoes for tracking up the craft. Send me all the tobacco you can spare as I have not 6 lbs. in the house as the Stone Indians are all gone towards the Stoney Mountain. I wish you to send up all the horses on the south side of the river as soon as possible in order to be drove to the westward where they are to be kept in the summer, as I understand there are a number of vagabond horse stealers from the Touchwood Hill intends visiting this quarter in the summer with a view of taking away all the horses they can find. I am dear Sir your humble servant G.S.

¹ 'Crocus - Another name for Hessians'. 'A Fur Trade Glossary Compiled by the late H. M. S. Cotter' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), September 1941, p. 36.

May 2, Tuesday. Wind westerly clear weather. Dispatched twelve men¹ in four canoes with furs and provisions to Buckingham House, also eight men² overland to assist up with the craft. The rest employed setting up stockades.

May 3, Wednesday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as yesterday. The last of the Souther'd Indians came in, brought but few furs. They informed me that there has been a distemper among the beaver of which great numbers have died as they are daily seen floating on the water since the breaking up of the ice.

May 4, Thursday. Wind NW blows very hard. Men employed building a watch house.

May 5, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

May 6, Saturday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as before. The water begins to rise in the river.

May 7, Sunday. Wind west blows very hard. The last of the Southerd Indians went away.

May 8, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed packing furs.

May 9, Tuesday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed packing furs.

May 10, Wednesday. Clear calm weather. Men employed as before.

May 11, Thursday. Wind southerly clear fine weather. The men finished packing the furs. In the evening fourteen men in two boats arrived from Buckingham House for furs etc.

May 12, Friday. Wind E cloudy weather. Men employed fitting bundles and loading boats. Four men arrived from Buckingham with all the horses.

Buckingham House, May 5 1797.

Dear Sir, Your men arrived yesterday safe in the four canoes with all the things sent, have dispatched them back again and shall send three more canoes up in a day or two. The boats went away this morning and Nichol Spence, boatbuilder, accompanied them. They have took up all the boards and line at this place.

The river did not clear of ice till yesterday and there is a great quantity left on the shores which will make it very bad tracking. The cold weather that has of late prevailed has very much retarded

¹ The twelve men in the four canoes each loaded with eight bundles of furs and seven bags of pemmican delivered the letter at Buckingham House on 4 May. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 50d.

² The eight men with horses arrived at Buckingham House on 6 May after having been lost 'in the little Beaver hills 2 Days'. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 51d.

the canoe building, however we have built four and hope if the weather permit shall get all the rest made and the others repaired by the time you arrive here.

There is not more than 6 lbs. of tobacco in the house and Indians has come in from two different parts this day for that article so that there will not be a bit to spare at this place and indeed it will not be half enough. Shall send up all the horses in a few days on the south side with four men along with them.

Wishing you a pleasant passage and an early sight of you, I remain dear Sir your obedient humble servant, Peter Fidler.¹

May 13, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. Dispatched both boats and two canoes² to Buckingham House with 181 bundles of furs and some provisions and the following letter:

Edmonton House, May 13, '97.

Dear Sir, Our four canoes only arrived here yesterday, the other three are not yet come however. I have dispatched thirty men in the boats and two canoes well loaded with furs etc. as per enclosed list. I expect to get everything down this trip as it would be too late to make a second.

I think leaving this place on Monday, get all the canoes mended and everything ready as soon as possible.

I am dear Sir yours etc. G.S.³

May 14, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Pitch canoes and preparing everything to set out to Buckingham tomorrow.

May 15, Monday. Wind W clear fine weather. After taking stock I delivered the charge of the house to Alexander Flett who with eleven men summers at Edmonton House. I embarked in four canoes with the last of 279 bundles of furs, upwards of 12,500 made beaver traded here this year.

¹ Fidler's copies of this letter are in B.49/a/27^b, fos. 51d.-52, and B.24/a/4, fo. 25-25d.

² This party arrived at Buckingham House on 16 May when Fidler noted in his rough journal (B.49/a/27^b): '2 boats 1 belonging to Mr Shaw - our other boat got broke about 4 miles from the House & filled with water . . . and most part of the furs & Provisions is very much wet . . . Mr Shaw sent away below 16 Canoes & 4 boats'. In his fair copy of the journal (B.24/a/4) which was sent to London at the end of the season Fidler merely remarked: '2 Boats & 2 of our Canoes arrived from Edmonton House loaded with Furs & Provisions one of the Boats met with an accident a little above the House & wet 44 bundles'.

³ The letter reached Fidler and was entered in his journals on 16 May. B.49/a/27^b, fo. 53; B.24/a/4, fo. 27.

May 18, Thursday. Wind variable clear cold weather. Arrived at Buckingham House,¹ where I found all well, but had the mortification to find the *Buffalo* boat had run foul of a stone, which stove her; by which accident upwards of forty bundles of furs got wet. All hands employed drying them. Carpenter repairing the boat.

May 19, Friday. Wind NW clear fine weather. Men employed drying and packing furs.

May 20, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men finished drying and packing furs.²

May 21, Sunday. Wind variable cloudy cold weather. This day after having put the little trading goods remaining here together with the house stores into the Canadian House and giving the key of the gates to Mr John Finlay³ who summers there, I embarked with two boats and nineteen canoes loaded with furs and provisions.⁴

May 30, Tuesday. Wind SE cloudy weather. Arrived at Carlton House, where I found all well.

June 1, Thursday. Wind N cloudy weather. Set out for Cumberland after having appointed James Sandison and three men⁵ to summer at Carlton House. Mr Bird follows tomorrow with three canoes.

June 4, Sunday. Wind N clear cold weather. Arrived at Cumberland House⁶ where I found all well, but to our great surprise the lake is still

¹ Fidler's Buckingham House journals (B.49/a/27^b, B.24/a/4) give Wednesday, 17 May, as the date of Sutherland's arrival with five, not four, canoes.

² According to Peter Fidler (B.49/a/27^b), James Park, George Monro, Robert Yorston, John Stickler, and John Halcro left Carlton House on 5 May for Buckingham House where they arrived on 20 May en route to Edmonton House with the following letter dated 2 May 1797 from James Bird to George Sutherland: 'The amazing bad Weather we have experienced at this place prevented there being a possibility of my sending off a Canoe sooner; the River Ice did not break here till the 26 Ult., since when it has continued to drive down with short intermissions till yesterday, but it still remains a matter of doubt whether the North Branch is yet open as the Country around has the appearance of Winter the Snow being still deep on the ground in every place not sheltered from the North Winds. Have sent you five Kegs of Spirits 1½ of Powder, 3 Rolls of Tobacco, seven Guns & three Bundles of Cloth &c an Account of the contents of which I have inclosed. Am sorry to inform you that we have been much disappointed in our Birchrind, instead of 80 fathoms which we were made to expect (the Indian who takes it having never previously deceived us) & which quantity I actually paid for we only received about 30 & that so narrow as to be unfit for anything larger than an Indian Canoe; I have however had Wood taken for two Canoes & for which I am in hopes of being able to get Birchrind. *This*, with my being under the necessity of having our Horses taken care of at a distance from the House & being rather backward in our other work owing to the lateness of the Season, prevents my being able to send you more than four men who I however hope will prove sufficient. Trade here is only about 1200 MBr. & we can expect very little more as great part of the Indians are already in the plains & declare they have not been able to find Beaver'. B.27/a/2.

³ For a biographical note, see W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 440.

⁴ Fidler was a member of the party which left on this day. B.49/a/27^b.

⁵ According to Peter Fidler these three men were James Gaddy, James Scott and Henry Budge. B.49/a/27^b.

⁶ It is not known if Mitchell Oman kept a journal or not at Cumberland House during 1796-97.

frozen over apparently as solid as it was in the middle of winter. Never was such a backward season known before by the oldest Indian here, and God only knows when we shall be able to pass through the lakes Bourbon¹ and Wennepeg, which we cannot expect to break up before the 20th at soonest.

June 12, Monday. Wind NNW clear weather. Having left Mr James Bird in charge of Cumberland House with three men, two of which (namely William Tate and John Mowat, both steersman) are ill of a rheumatic complaint, we embarked with two boats and nineteen canoes for York Fort. It was with some difficulty we got a passage cut and broke through the ice in the lake for a passage for the canoes.

June 15, Thursday. Arrived near the long point in the Cedar or Lake Bourbon, where our career is effectually stopped up by the ice. Found the Canadian traders tenting on an island where we also put up.²

June 17, Saturday. Being heartily tired of laying here, sent the canoes to carry over a point of land, and we forced the boats through heavy driving ice about 1½ mile and got into clear water.

June 18, Sunday. Arrived at the Great Rapid, where we took out all the furs, and shot down the rapid without injuring the boats or canoes. Indeed the boats seems to exceed even my utmost expectations on the falls as they did not ship any water, although the waves ran very high.³

*June 19, Monday.*⁴ Parted with the Canadians at the mouth of Lake Wennepeg. They proceeded towards the Great Carrying Place and we to York Fort. The weather being exceedingly foggy we steered by compass NbE, it being our course for about seven miles when we were suddenly brought up by the ice, when we were obliged to make for the land and put up. About 2 p.m. the weather cleared up, when to our mortification we beheld the lake frozen over apparently as solid as it was at any time in the winter – a circumstance never known before – so that we have no prospect of getting from here for a considerable time, perhaps a month, unless there are heavy gales of wind from the northwards. Messrs Longmoore and Isham with nine men in four canoes from Swan River came to us where we were tenting on the 19th⁵ where we were all obliged to remain in great suspense until

¹ Cedar or Bourbon Lake.

² According to Fidler, it was on Wednesday, 14 June, that Sutherland and party came up with 'Mr Shaw, Finlay and all the French canoes – 29 in number'. B.49/a/27^b.

³ According to Fidler, the North Westers also reached the Grand Rapid on this day and passed over it 'into the Lake' to put up, while Sutherland's party 'stopt at the bottom of the fall'. B.49/a/27^b.

⁴ Fidler recorded on 19 June: 'Lay by & caught a great many Jack fish', and on 20 June, 'Got all underway & necessitated to put ashore at the first point the Lake not yet broke up . . .'. B.49/a/27^b.

⁵ Fidler's journal gives the date of their arrival as 23 June and states that they brought thirty-four bundles of furs. They had left Swan River House on 6 June. On the afternoon of the 23rd 'the wind blew fresh at West & cleared the Ice a little from the Shore' so Sutherland's and Longmoor's parties travelled further in the next two and a half days. B.49/a/27^b.

July 1. When we made a shift to force our way through the ice with the boats and the canoes followed next day when we arrived at Jack River House¹ and found all well.² Suffice it to say that after cutting tracks and drawing the boats over several carrying places we arrived at the head of Trout River on the 8th instant,³ where I propose leaving the boats, as the navigation is too difficult for them to proceed any further. So they must remain here with four men to take care of them and cargoes until the canoes arrives from Gordon House with trading goods etc., and here I cannot help expressing my satisfaction at the probable advantages the honourable Company are likely to reap from the use of boats in this quarter. The easy draught of water, the facility with which we have brought them from Edmonton House to this place – a distance of 1200 miles – the cargoes they are likely to carry up to from whence they came etc.

July 9. Having left John Moore, boat builder, to make oars, setting poles etc. with three men⁴ to take care of the cargoes of the boats, consisting of 113 bundles of furs, which are to come down the second trip, we set out with all our canoes, twenty-three in number, for Gordon House in Hill River, where we arrived the 12th instant. Here we found all well, with a large assortment of trading goods brought from York. I also received letters from Mr Colen⁵ on business, who had been here

¹ Fidler noted in his journal that the brigade stayed from 10 a.m. to 3.15 p.m. on 2 July before continuing the journey. Jack River had broken up on 1 June and, continued Fidler, 'all the woods here about has the appearance of the middle of Summer; the trees being all entirely covered with large leaves, such a surprizing difference in such a small distance is very extraordinary in the Foliage'. B.49/a/27^b.

² The Canadians built a house on Jack River 'near the Play Green in the Main track to Cumberland House, and almost in the Centre of York Fort Home Guard Hunters', in the autumn of 1795. Colen learnt from Indians visiting York on 31 May 1796 that the Canadians had been 'introduced . . . to the haunts' of York Factory's 'Hunting Indians' by two Company deserters, Peter Sabbeston, senior, and John Ward. To meet this new threat to the Company's trade Colen ordered James Tate to close Apsley House on Cross Lake and to remove the goods to Jack River. The new house on Jack River, 40 × 22 feet, was called Colen's Cot. Henry Hallett, who was in charge during 1796–97, competed against William McKay and traded 1196 made beaver. B.239/a/99, 31 May, 27 June, 12 and 17 July 1796; B.239/b/58, fos. 102–102d., 115–115d.; B.154/a/1, 11 August, 15 September 1796; B.239/d/112, fo. 66.

³ Fidler gives the date 7 July. B.49/a/27^b.

⁴ Oman Norquay, John Davey, and Oman Budge. B.49/a/27^b.

⁵ James Peter Whitford noted in the Gordon House journal on 12 July the arrival of Messrs Sutherland, Longmoor, Isham, Fidler, and Oman from Cumberland House after a journey of thirty days. B.81/a/3. One of the letters received from Colen was doubtless that dated York Factory, 13 March 1797, addressed to 'the Officer in Command for the time being of the Hudson's Bay Company's Servants who accompanies the Canoes down to Gordon House in the spring'. This letter required that the men, after resting, should return to Jack River and not come to York Factory because provisions were short there. See p. 70, n. 6. Another letter was dated Gordon House, 1 July 1797 (B.239/b/66, fos. 1–3d.) when Colen was on the point of returning to York Factory to get the boats in readiness for discharging cargo on arrival of the ship from England. In this letter Colen gave Sutherland details of his troubles at York Factory during the winter of 1796–97. Up to the time of

and waited a long time for our arrival, but had returned, his presence being necessary at the Factory.

July 13. Busily employed settling the canoes, Mr Whitford and Ward¹ serving out the men. I already find I will have great difficulty to get the men to go the second trip owing to their not having their usual supply of provisions or articles of clothing to be got here, such as cotton shirts, duck trousers etc.

July 14. Employed as yesterday and after much difficulty and altercation, I fitted out seventeen canoes well loaded with trading goods etc. The cargoes of ten of which are for the boats, two to go as far as Jack River House, and the remaining five are to accompany the boats inland direct. They all set off the 17th as did also myself with ten men, mostly lame, in four canoes and a small boat I found here, with the remainder of the furs for York Factory where we arrived the 18th instant, where we found the warehouses in a very impoverished state both with respect to trading goods and provisions.

Wishing success to the honourable Company's affairs at home and abroad, I am honourable Sirs your faithful servant, George Sutherland.

writing Colen had sent goods valued 30,000 made beaver from York Fort to Gordon House ready for the next stage of the journey inland.

¹ John Ward, from London, who had joined the Company as a writer in 1795 for five years at £15 per annum. He was then about 18 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 71; A.30/8, fo. 27.

JOURNAL OF WILLIAM TOMISON

1797-1798

A Diary of Transactions and Occurrences by William Tomison,
Chief Factor Inland, Edmonton House, North America, for the
Honourable Hudson's Bay Company.

Edmonton House, North America

1797

October 2, Monday. Wind variable clear fine weather. In the forenoon arrived at this place where I¹ found all well and a number of Indians waiting our arrival.

October 3, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed clearing warehouses, yard etc. for the reception of the trading goods etc.

October 4, Wednesday. Clear calm weather. Men employed as yesterday. Several Indians came in, brought some dry provisions.

October 5, Thursday. Wind NE blows hard. In the forenoon our five canoes arrived from Buckingham with trading goods etc. Men employed carrying up and stowing away.

October 6, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Canoe men resting themselves, the others variously employed. At noon both our boats arrived with trading goods etc. And here I cannot help expressing my satisfaction at seeing them brought to the farthest settlement your Honours have inland, and both their crews eighteen in number have brought goods equal to forty men in canoes. Gave all our trading Indians some tobacco and a general drink. [*Marginal note in pencil*: 'Mr T not arrived see Nov. 5 & 6'].

October 7, Saturday. Wind NW cloudy cold weather. Carpenter and boat builder putting up cabins, bed places etc. Summer men variously employed, the others resting themselves. All the Indians drinking.

October 8, Sunday. Wind northerly clear cool weather. The hunter sent in the flesh of a moose deer.

October 9, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. This morning sent eight men in two canoes to Buckingham House for some trading goods left there, the river being very shoal. Also sent ten men down with all the

¹ George Sutherland, who had left York Factory on 26 July (B.239/a/100). He had sent off five loaded canoes and two boats from Buckingham House on 30 September and then, with two men, had himself set off overland for Edmonton House. B.24/a/5.

horses belonging to that settlement. Likewise two men with horses to meet the fall canoes from York Fort. The men at home at various jobs.

October 10, Tuesday. Wind south clear fine weather. Sent Gilbert Laughton with three men in a canoe up the river to look for timber to build boats and canoes, the others cutting birch wood to burn coal for the blacksmith. Several Indians arrived and some took debt and went away.

October 11, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

October 12, Thursday. Clear calm weather. Men employed as before.

October 13, Friday. Weather as yesterday. Gilbert Laughton and party arrived, having found timber fit for boat and canoe building about forty miles up the river. Several Indians went away.

October 14, Saturday. Wind SE cloudy weather. Sent nine men to the woods to get canoe wood, also six men to cut down and raft timber for building boats etc. The others employed as before.

October 15, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Some Indians went away.

October 16, Monday. Wind SW cloudy weather. All hands getting home hay. Some Southerd Indians arrived.

October 17, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same. Indians all drinking.

October 18, Wednesday. Wind easterly cloudy weather with snow. The men employed as before. Some of the Indians taken debt and part going away.

October 19, Thursday. Wind southerly clear weather. Men employed getting firewood. Indians all gone.

October 20, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ as before. Sent two men to the hunter's tent for the meat of three cattle and returned in the evening.

October 21, Saturday. Wind northerly cloudy cold weather. The men that went to raft wood on Saturday last returned with ninety pieces of timber, the rest cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. The hunter brought in the flesh of three red deer.

October 22, Sunday. Wind SW part clear and part cloudy weather with snow at times. Some Southerd Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

October 23, Monday. Wind and weather the same. The boat builders with two men cutting down and collecting boat timbers. Joiner at work on the new house, one man making kegs, tailor at work for trade, the rest cutting firewood. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

October 24, Tuesday. Wind NE cloudy weather with snow. Men employed as yesterday. Two moose brought in by the hunter.

October 25, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. A few Muddy River Indians arrived, brought little or nothing. In the afternoon Gilbert Laughton and party arrived with wood sufficient to build four canoes, also birch for the beaver press etc.

October 26, Thursday. Wind SE clear cold weather which has put driving ice in the river. Men employed carrying up canoe wood etc. The Indians of yesterday went away.

October 27, Friday. Wind northerly cloudy cold weather much ice driving in the river. Tradesmen as before, the rest cutting firewood.

October 28, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen as before, the rest laying up boats and canoes etc. A few Southerd Indians arrived with a few furs. Sent two men to tent with the hunters.

October 29, Sunday. Clear calm weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

October 30, Monday. Wind westerly cloudy warm weather with rain. Tradesmen as before, the rest digging a trench to let out the stockades, in order to make room for boat and canoe building. Some Swampy Ground Stone Indians arrived, also a few Southerd Indians, each of whom brought a tolerable good trade. The men from the hunting tent arrived with the flesh of three moose deer.

October 31, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

November 1, Wednesday. Wind NW cloudy weather. Tradesmen as before, the rest taking down and setting up stockades.

November 2, Thursday. Wind northerly cold weather. Men employed as yesterday. A few Southerd Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

November 3, Friday. Wind SW cloudy weather with rain. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday took debt and went away.

November 4, Saturday. Wind NW cloudy weather with rain. Some men bringing home boats timbers, keels etc., a few tying up furs, blacksmith with the rest of the men cutting down birch to burn coal for the forge. The men from the hunter arrived with the flesh of four moose deer.

November 5, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. This afternoon Mr William Tomison with eleven men arrived from York Factory.¹ A tribe of Muddy River Indians arrived.

November 6, Monday. Wind NE cloudy cold weather some ice driving in the river. Men variously employed. This day delivered the house with

¹ Tomison, returning after spending 1796-97 in England (see p. 126, n.2), arrived at Buckingham House from York Factory with three large canoes loaded with trading goods on 25 October but as he had 'a small hurt in one of his knees' he had remained there until 31 October before continuing to Edmonton House. B.24/a/5.

all your Honours' property to Mr William Tomison. Number of furs now in the house 1320 made beaver. The Indians went away.

November 7, Tuesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cold freezing weather. Received one red deer from the hunting tent. At noon two Muddy River Indians arrived, brought a few very ordinary wolves and a trifle of provisions which they traded and went away. Sent one man to the hunting tent, the rest variously employed.

November 8, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest cutting firewood and sawing stuff for sleds. The river set fast in the night.¹

November 9, Thursday. Wind southerly weather as before. The carpenters putting up a cabin for themselves to sleep in, the rest bringing home charcoal for the smith. At 10 a.m. an Indian arrived, brought a few beaver which he traded and went away.

November 10, Friday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with a little snow. The carpenters as before, tailors making clothing for the men, the smith making nails for the gate hinges at Buckingham House, the rest cutting firewood.

November 11, Saturday. Wind as yesterday weather cloudy with snow. In the forenoon men employed within doors.

November 12, Sunday. Wind NW cloudy cold weather.

November 13, Monday. Wind easterly cloudy cold weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest cutting down and collecting firewood. The men from the hunter's tent arrived with the flesh of four animals.

November 14, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ as before.²

November 15, Wednesday. Wind SE cloudy cold weather. Tradesmen as before, the rest cutting down and hauling firewood.

November 16, Thursday. Wind and weather the same. Men employed as before.

November 17, Friday. Wind NW clear fine weather. Sent two men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, the rest variously employed. At noon Mr Geo. Sutherland proceeded his journey for Buckingham, accompanied by nine men, five of which winters there, the rest to return with trading goods etc.³ One tent of Muddy River Indians arrived.

¹ Duncan McGillivray at Fort Augustus had a visit from his colleagues, [John] McDonald and [Donald] McTavish. They apparently left for their own stations about five or six days later. B.239/b/66, fo. 47d.

² For reference to the letter written by Duncan McGillivray to Tomison between 8 and 14 November 1797, see pp. xlv, 134.

³ Sutherland arrived at Buckingham House on 23 November and succeeded Henry Hallett in charge. B.24/a/5.

November 18, Saturday. A light breeze cloudy weather. Men employed as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday arrived with the flesh of three red deer and one-half. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

November 19, Sunday. Wind SW part clear and part cloudy weather with snow at times. A Blood Indian arrived, brought a few wolves which he traded and went away.

November 20, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, the rest cutting down and hauling home firewood.

November 21, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Smith making nails, the rest employed as before.

November 22, Wednesday. Wind easterly clear fine weather. Men employed as before. A Southerd Indian arrived, brought a few furs which he traded and went away.

November 23, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

November 24, Friday. A light breeze SW clear weather. Sent eight men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, the rest employed as before.

November 25, Saturday. Wind NW cloudy weather with sleet at times. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of seven animals.

November 26, Sunday. Wind westerly cloudy weather with rain all day.

November 27, Monday. A strong breeze NW clear cold weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, sent six men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, the rest cutting down and collecting firewood.

November 28, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men sent for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of six animals, the others employed as yesterday.

November 29, Wednesday. Wind SW clear cold weather. Sent four men to fetch meat, the rest employed as before.

November 30, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of four animals, the rest employed as before.

December 1, Friday. A strong breeze NW cloudy cold weather with a little snow. Men employed as before. In the evening a Fall Indian young man arrived for tobacco etc.

December 2, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. A tribe of Fall Indians arrived.

*December 3, Sunday.*¹ Calm clear fine weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. At noon the men that went to Buckingham the 17th November arrived with trading goods etc. the following letters.²

December 4, Monday. Wind SW clear fine weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, four men fetching meat, the rest cutting down and hauling firewood. This day measured four pieces of narrow gartering which was no more than 95 yds., they charge from York Fort 144 yards which is 49 yds. deficient.³

December 5, Tuesday. A fresh breeze westerly clear thawing weather. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of three animals, the rest as before.

December 6, Wednesday. Wind NW cloudy weather with rain. Sent three men to the hunter's tent for meat, the rest employed as before.

December 7, Thursday. Wind SW clear thawing weather. Men employed as before, the men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of three animals.

December 8, Friday. A light breeze NE cloudy weather. Men's employ as before. A few Fall Indians arrived.

December 9, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen as before, the rest cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

December 10, Sunday. Wind and weather as before.

December 11, Monday. Wind NW clear cold weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest cutting down and collecting firewood.

December 12, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ as yesterday.

December 13, Wednesday. A light breeze SW thawing weather. Tradesmen as before, the rest hauling firewood.

December 14, Thursday. A light breeze NW clear cold weather. Men employed as yesterday. A few Muddy River Indians arrived, they traded and went away in the evening.

December 15, Friday. Wind and weather the same. Men's employ the same.

¹ George Sutherland's Buckingham House journal entry for this day notes '... this Evening we had a Total Eclips of the moon we cannot tell Precisely when it began as it was not Observed till 5 minutes past nine - and Continued till 21 minutes past 11 it was Beautiful to a great Degree as we had the Advantage of full Moon and very clear - with an Infinite Multitude of Stars. Perhaps there is no Country in the World where the heavenly Bodies can be veiwed with the Naked Eye to more advantage then here in the Winter Season...'. B.24/a/5.

² See p. 128.

³ For Tomison's letter to Sutherland of 4 December, see p. 129. It was apparently taken to Buckingham House by 'the Canadians'. See p. 129.

December 16, Saturday. Wind northerly clear cold weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. A few Stone Indians arrived.

December 17, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

December 18, Monday. Wind SW cloudy weather. Tradesmen at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, the rest cutting down and collecting firewood.

December 19, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as yesterday.

December 20, Wednesday. A fresh breeze SW cloudy weather. Sent three men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, the rest as before.

December 21, Thursday. Wind NE part clear and part cloudy weather. The men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of five red deer, also sent another man for meat. Men's employ as before.

December 22, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same, the man that went for flesh yesterday returned with the flesh of one red deer.

December 23, Saturday. Calm cloudy weather. Men employed cleaning the yard and cutting firewood. A few Muddy River Indians arrived.

December 24, Sunday. Wind northerly cloudy with snow. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

December 25, Monday. Wind NE clear fine weather.

December 26, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

December 27, Wednesday. A light breeze SW clear thawing weather. Sent ten men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest about trifling duty indoors.

December 28, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ as before, the men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of fifteen cows. A tribe of Fall Indians arrived.

December 29, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed cutting wood. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

December 30, Saturday. A strong breeze southerly clear sharp weather. Men employed as yesterday. Three Blackfoot Indians arrived for tobacco etc. and went away in the evening.

December 31, Sunday. Wind NW fine clear weather. A band of Blackfoot Indians arrived.

January 1, 1798, Monday. Wind SW clear fine weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. Two Southerd Indians arrived.

January 2, Tuesday. Wind variable clear cold weather. Tradesmen at

their respective duties, the rest cutting firewood. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 3, Wednesday. Wind NE cloudy weather. Sent four men to the hunter's tent to fetch meat, the rest as yesterday.

January 4, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent three men to tent with the hunters, the men that went for meat yesterday returned with the flesh of four buffalo, the rest employed as before.

January 5, Friday. Wind in the east quarter a gentle breeze with cloudy weather. Sent two men to fetch meat. [*Margin:* 'Mr Prudent went down to Buckingham House'] Tradesmen employed at their respective duties and the rest falling and collecting firewood. At noon thirteen Blackfoot Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away at 3 p.m. They arrived and traded with part of them.

January 6, Saturday. Wind westerly weather as before. The men employed as yesterday, those that went for meat returned and brought the flesh of two buffalo. Traded with the rest of the Indians.

January 7, Sunday. Wind as yesterday clear sharp weather. At 8 a.m. the Blackfoot Indians went away.

January 8, Monday. Wind as yesterday with clear fine weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, sent seven men to fetch meat from the hunting tent, the rest cutting firewood and tied up the furs traded from the Indians that went away yesterday.

January 9, Tuesday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze clear fine weather. The tradesmen as before, three men making up leaf tobacco, the rest cutting and hauling firewood. At 2 p.m. those came home that went for meat, brought the flesh of seven buffalo.

January 10, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. The smith making iron work for the boats, the rest employed as yesterday.

January 11, Thursday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with warm weather. The men employed as yesterday. At noon three Indians arrived, brought a few furs which they traded chiefly for brandy.

January 12, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The smith repairing trading guns, the rest employed as before. The Indians that came yesterday went away.

January 13, Saturday. Wind and weather as before. The smith making nails for the boats, those sent up being unfit for the purpose, the rest employed as before. At 1 p.m. one man came home from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

January 14, Sunday. Wind as yesterday with thick cloudy weather.

January 15, Monday. Wind northerly a strong breeze with drifting weather. Sent six men to fetch meat, the smith, sawyers, carpenters

and tailors at their respective duties, and the rest employed within doors.

January 16, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday but more moderate with sharp weather. The tradesmen employed as yesterday, and the rest cutting firewood. At 3 p.m. those that went for meat came home and brought the flesh of seven buffalo.

January 17, Wednesday. Little wind variable with clear sharp weather. Sent three men to fetch meat, the rest employed as before. At 2 p.m. Mr Prudent returned from Buckingham House and brought the disagreeable news of Donald Mowat having departed this life after a long illness.¹

January 18, Thursday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear sharp weather. The men employed as before. At 2 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of three buffalo.

January 19, Friday. Wind northerly cloudy weather with snow. Sent two men for meat, the smith making awl blades, the rest employed as on the proceeding days. At noon three Muddy River Indians arrived for tobacco which they got and went away.

January 20, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with drifting weather. The men employed as before. At 1 p.m. a small band of Muddy River Indians arrived and traded with part of them; also a Stone Indian man and his wife arrived in the evening, brought a few parchment beaver.

January 21, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cold sharp weather. Traded with the Indians and they went away. At 4 p.m. the two men returned that went for meat on Friday, brought the flesh of two buffalo: they lost their way the first day and did not get to the tent.

January 22, Monday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear sharp weather. The tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest falling and collecting firewood.

January 23, Tuesday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with fine weather. Sent eight men to fetch meat, the rest employed as yesterday.

January 24, Wednesday. Wind easterly a small breeze with snow at intervals. The smith making nails and rivets for the boats, the rest employed as before. At 4 p.m. those came home that went for meat brought the flesh of seven buffalo.

January 25, Thursday. Wind southerly a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The men employed as before. At noon eight Blood and Blackfoot Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

January 26, Friday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with fine weather. Sent five men to fetch meat, the rest employed as before. At noon the Blood and Blackfoot Indians arrived, about forty in number besides

¹ See p. 128, n. 2.

women and children, and as many to the Canadian House. In the evening traded with part of them.

January 27, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest variously employed. Finished trading with the Indians and they went away. At 3 p.m. those that went for meat returned, brought the flesh of five buffalo.

January 28, Sunday. Wind as yesterday a gentle breeze with warm weather. At noon an Indian woman arrived, brought a few skins which she traded for brandy and went away. At 2 p.m. Thomas Louted¹ came home, brought George Gun on a sled from the hunting tent, being wounded at a set gun² the last evening, the shot has taken him in the calf of the right leg, many of which has gone clear through but what number remains is unknown.

January 29, Monday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with fine weather. Sent six men to fetch meat, the tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest cutting firewood.

January 30, Tuesday. Wind variable almost calm. The tradesmen as before, and the rest employed hauling firewood and cutting ice out of the river to put into the provision house. At noon those came home that went for meat brought the flesh of six poor buffalo.

January 31, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Sent twelve men for meat, and the rest employed as on the proceeding [*sic*, here and elsewhere in this journal] day. At 5 p.m. three Southerd Indians, arrived brought very little.

February 1, Thursday. Wind and weather much the same. The men employed as before, at 10 a.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of eleven buffalo. Also a Southerd Indian arrived, brought four skins which he traded and went away. Traded with those that came yesterday and gave them a small supply of ammunition and tobacco, these brought no more than 14½ made beaver.

February 2, Friday. Wind and weather the same. The tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest employed bringing ice for the provision house. At noon the Indians went away.

February 3, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear thawing weather. The tradesmen employed as before, the rest cutting firewood and cleaning the yard.

February 4, Sunday. Wind variable almost calm weather as before. At 8 a.m. six Fall Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

¹ Thomas Louted (Loutitt) from Harray, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who had joined the Company in 1793. He was listed as a canoeman, aged about 30 years in 1798. A.30/8, fo. 35; A.32/5, fo. 72.

² For James Isham's illustration of a gun set to catch animals, see *H.B.R.S.*, XII, 159.

February 5, Monday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At noon seven tents of Fall Indians arrived, three of which was clothed; traded a few wolves and foxes also some provisions. Sent five men to fetch meat, the rest employed as last week.

February 6, Tuesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. At 8 a.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of four buffalo; the rest mostly employed within doors to prevent the Indians from thieving. Finished trading with them by 4 p.m., these have brought above 1000 lbs. of provisions and about 300 made beaver in wolves and foxes which did not amount to ten beaver per man.

February 7, Wednesday. Wind NE weather much the same. The smith making nails for the boats, 3000 is wanted and nothing to make them of but the iron work that came up for trade, a great part of which is already made up; the other tradesmen employed at their respective duties, the rest hauling and cutting firewood, also did jobs within doors. The Fall Indians went away and late in the evening one Southerd Indian arrived and brought a few skins on his back.

February 8, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. At 5 p.m. a Stone Indian man and three women arrived, brought a few furs, part of which they traded and got drunk.

February 9, Friday. Wind westerly a small breeze clear fine weather. The tradesmen at their respective duties, the rest employed within doors and cutting firewood. Traded with the Indians and they went away, and at 4 p.m. two more of the same tribe arrived, brought little or nothing.

February 10, Saturday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with snow the after part of day. The tradesmen as before, the rest cutting firewood. Dug a grave and buried one of the best Indians this country can produce; he departed this life in the night, after a long lingering disorder of sixteen months brought on by immoderate drinking at both houses in the fall '96. He has left a wife and six children which has been very expensive for the last twelve months and will be for some time to come; he traded at the honourable Company's settlements since Hudsons House was settled.¹ At 10 a.m. two Sussew Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away, as did the two Stone Indians.

February 11, Sunday. Wind NE a small breeze with cloudy weather. At noon the Sussews and three Southerd Indians arrived, sixteen in number. Also one man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

February 12, Monday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties. George Gun much better, took several shot out of his leg yesterday. The rest cut firewood.

¹ See p. 25, n. 1.

Traded with the Indians and they went away, these have brought but little provisions and not above 200 wolves, and those very Indians used to bring above 1000 parchment beaver.

February 13, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. Sent nine men to fetch meat, the rest employed as yesterday. At 8 a.m. Mr Hallet and two men arrived from Buckingham House.¹

February 14, Wednesday. Wind easterly a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The tradesmen at their respective duties and the rest employed within doors. At 2 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of nine buffalo.

February 15, Thursday. Wind in the east quarter cloudy weather with drizzling snow most part of the day. Sent nine men to fetch meat, the rest employed within doors.

February 16, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. At half past 5 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of seven buffalo.

February 17, Saturday. Wind as before with clear fine weather. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. At half past 4 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of eight buffalo.

February 18, Sunday. Wind as before with snow most part of the day.

February 19, Monday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with snow most part of the day. Sent nine men to fetch meat, the smith repairing broken hatchets, and the rest picking oakum for the boats. Late in the evening one tent of Fall Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

February 20, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, and the rest cut firewood. The Indians of yesterday traded what little they brought and went away at noon.

February 21, Wednesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with a little snow. The men employed as yesterday. At 10 a.m. those returned that went for meat on Monday, brought the flesh of eight poor buffalo.

February 22, Thursday. Wind westerly a small breeze with clear weather. Sent eight men to fetch meat and the rest variously employed. In the evening an Indian man and his wife arrived, brought a few furs to trade.

February 23, Friday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather cloudy and inclined to snow. The men employed as before. At 3 p.m. those that went for meat returned, brought the flesh of seven very poor buffalo.

February 24, Saturday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The men cut firewood and put the snow out of the yard that fell in the night. The Indians traded and went away.

¹ For a copy of George Sutherland's letter dated 7 February which Hallett brought, see p. 129.

February 25,¹ Sunday. Wind as yesterday weather cloudy with a drizzling snow. An Indian arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco.

February 26, Monday. Wind ENE a fresh breeze with a continuance of snow. The men employed within doors. At 4 p.m. Assinipoiet Indian came for tobacco.

February 27, Tuesday. Wind NE a small breeze cloudy mild weather. Sent five men to fetch meat. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, and the rest put the snow out of the yard. At 3 p.m. one tent of Assinipoiet Indians arrived and they brought provisions to trade and a few wolf skins.

February 28, Wednesday. Wind as before with cloudy mild weather. The boat builders and one man looking out for stuff for oars for the boats, the smith making heel plates for head and stern of the boats, the rest employed at sundry duties. The Indians traded some provisions and got drunk.

March 1, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. At 4 p.m. those that went for meat returned, brought the flesh of six buffalo. The Indians traded and went away. At 5 p.m. three more arrived, brought little or nothing. The men from Buckingham House returned, accompanied by Prudent.²

March 2, Friday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Sent eight men to fetch meat, the tradesmen employed as before, and the rest cut firewood.

March 3, Saturday. Wind and weather much the same. The men employed as yesterday. At 4 p.m. part of those that went for meat returned, brought the flesh of six poor buffalo. At noon the Indians went away, and four more came which went away also, and the whole did not bring above twenty made beaver. At half past 6 p.m. two more arrived from a buffalo pound [MS here and elsewhere in this journal: 'pond'] and brought nothing at all.

March 4, Sunday. Wind NW a small breeze clear fine weather. Gave the Indians a supply of tobacco that came last evening and they went away.

March 5, Monday. Wind between north and east a fresh breeze with snow and drift. Sent seven men to fetch meat. Gilbert Laughton repairing trading guns, and the rest employed within doors.

March 6, Tuesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with snow all day. The men employed as yesterday.

March 7, Wednesday. Wind SE weather as yesterday. Gilbert Laughton

¹ For Tomison's letter to Sutherland of this date (which apparently was taken by Pruden and the others on 1 March), see p. 129.

² Pruden and Hallett, accompanied by two men, reached Buckingham House on 7 March. B.24/a/5.

cleaning and repairing trading guns, the rest cut firewood and made up leaf tobacco for trade. At 3 p.m. those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of six poor buffalo. Also ten Muddy River Indians and Blood Indians came for tobacco.

March 8, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday till noon afterwards clear weather. The men employed as on the preceding day.

March 9, Friday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze clear fine weather. Gilbert Laughton repairing trading guns, many of which is in very bad condition owing to bad package. Sent seventeen men to fetch meat, and the rest making up leaf tobacco. At 8 a.m. the Indians went away: these had tobacco powder and paint for twenty-five leaders. In quantity as follows: tobacco 20 lbs., powder 12 lbs., vermilion 12 oz.

March 10, Saturday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with cloudy mild weather. The men employed about various jobs. At noon one Blood and one Muddy River Indian came for tobacco which they got and went away.

March 11, Sunday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze with cloudy mild weather. In the evening an Indian arrived, brought a few furs to trade.

March 12, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Sent four men to fetch meat, and the rest employed within doors. Traded with the Indian and he went away, and at noon the Blood and Muddy River Indians arrived, eighty-three able men and about 300 women and children, also two of the Cuttencha tribe¹ which I sent for. Those have not brought any furs of any kind but by their account their country abounds with all kinds, but far off.² Those that went for meat on Friday returned, brought the flesh of sixteen buffalo.

March 13, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with clear thawing weather. The men attending the house and cut firewood. Traded with part of the Indians and rigged twenty-two of them. In the evening the boat

¹ See p. lxxxii, notes 2, 3. Kootenay (Kutenai) Indians who form a distinct linguistic stock and whose legends and traditions indicate that they once lived east of the Rocky Mountains. See F. W. Hodge, *Handbook of Indians of Canada* published as an Appendix to the Tenth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada (Ottawa, 1913), pp. 256-8; Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, 1932), pp. 358-61.

² Peter Fidler was the first European to meet the Kootenay. The encounter took place on 31 December 1792 when he, the only white man in the party, was with thirty Piegan Indians who traded with the inhabitants of seven Kootenay tents such articles as old kettles and other second-hand European products for horses. At that time, according to Fidler, 'they [the Kootenay] was never near any of the Trading Settlements altho they much wish it But the Muddy River [Piegan], Blood, Black Feet, & Southern Indians always prevents them, they wishing to monopolize all their skins to themselves, which they do giving the Poor Indians only a meer trifle for, they scarce give them as much for 10 Skins as they can get for one at the Trading Settlements'. Fidler's visit to the Kootenay tents on Oldman River (Alberta) was made during his 'Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains, in 1792 & 3'. The journal of this journey, written or revised some years later, is in E.3/2, pp. 1-69. See J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966), p. 74 *et seq.*

builders came home having blocked out twenty-seven oars and sixteen poles. Those that went for meat returned, also those that was at the hunting tent.

March 14,¹ Wednesday. Wind northerly weather much the same as before. The tradesmen at their respective duties and the rest as before. Still busy trading with the Indians.

March 15,¹ Thursday. Wind and weather much the same as before. The men employed as on the preceding day. Finished trading with the Indians and part of them went away. Presented the Cuttencha Indian with sundry articles to the amount of forty beaver in goods.

March 16, Friday. Wind SW a small breeze with clear weather. The tradesmen employed as before, the rest tying up small foxes and hauling firewood. Most part of the Indians went away.

March 17, Saturday. Wind WSW a small breeze first part clear, latter part cloudy with snow in the evening. The men employed as on the preceding day, finished tying up the skins now brought, the quantity as follows viz. whole parchment beaver 20, wolves 940, foxes red 22, grey 3212, badgers 13, wolverenes 6, bears old grizzle 2, cub 2 and provisions of sorts 200 lbs. This band traded no less than 34 guns besides two given to the principal men. I have been obliged to dress several of them with the best hats, for want of common ones and had not hatchets for half of them, and no more than three kegs of powder and 3 rolls of tobacco now in the house which would be little enough two months hence. At 2 p.m. four Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

March 18, Sunday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. At 4 p.m. our hunters arrived, as also two Assinniepoiet Indian women, brought a few beaver which they traded and went away.

March 19, Monday. Wind as before with cloudy fine weather. The smith making nails for the boats, the other tradesmen employed at their respective duties. John Flett and John Mowat making a bench for dressing canoe wood, and the rest cutting ice out of the river, and carrying it into the provision house to preserve the fresh meat.

March 20,² Tuesday. Wind and weather much the same. The men employed as on the preceding day. Paid off our hunters and sent them away to kill beaver. The Indians that arrived on the 17th instant got a supply and went away also.

March 21, Wednesday. Little wind easterly till the evening afterwards blowed hard with snow from the north. Three men employed at canoe

¹ Tomison received Sutherland's letter of 3 March from Buckingham House on this day. See pp. 130-1.

² For Tomison's letter of this date to George Sutherland at Buckingham House, see p. 131.

work, the rest as before. At 4 p.m. two Assinipoit Indians arrived for a supply of tobacco.

March 22, Thursday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather. Gilbert Laughton making stems for canoes, two men planing timbers for ditto, the other tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest employed about various duty. At 5 p.m. two Indian women came brought some pitch and a few furs.

March 23, Friday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze a sharp frost in the night but warm in the day. The tradesmen as before, and the rest sawing stuff for a press and making wedges for ditto.

March 24, Saturday. Wind WSW weather as yesterday. The men employed as on the preceding day. Late in the evening two young Indians arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco.

March 25, Sunday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear weather. Gave the Indians a supply of tobacco and ammunition and they went away. At 2 p.m. four Bungee Indians arrived at the Canadian house which left forty-four beaver a little way from this, which I sent two men for and returned in an hour afterwards.

March 26, Monday. Wind variable light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. The tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest employed within doors.

March 27, Tuesday. Wind variable with cloudy weather. The boat builders making pitch for the boats, Gilbert Laughton bending head timbers for canoes, two men hewing stuff for a watch-house, and the rest variously employed. The Bungee Indians traded forty-five beaver, twenty of which was for silver work;¹ they wanted wampum² very much which I was sorry to inform there was none. I was informed in England that that article was sent out according to my request but when I opened the box that should have contained them there was no such article to be found,

¹ A.6/16, p. 61, Governor and Committee to Joseph Colen and council at York Factory, London, 31 May 1797, paragraph 22, 'We have sent you some silver Ornaments made under the direction of Mr Tomison and have fixed the Standard according to the Numbers as under altho' we do not confine you to it as a present of small Value is sometimes necessary to be made to the Chief Indians

No. 1	3 Beaver	No. 4	2 Beaver	No. 7	1 Beaver
2	2 ditto	5	3 ditto	8	1½ do.
3	3 ditto	6	1 ditto	9	¼ do.'

The 'sundry articles' made in silver were supplied to the Company by William and George Russell of Birmingham. A.5/4, pp. 1, 3; A.1/47, fos. 82d., 84d.

² As the Indians traded 'silver work' in lieu of wampum they evidently wanted the shell beads for ornaments rather than currency. Writing in 1820 Peter Fidler said, 'some few of the young Bungee Men are very flashy & decorated with a variety of Silver ornaments in the Summer Months, such as necklaces made of whampum about 2 Inches broad, arm and wrist bands with gorgets Broaches &c, Scarlet Leggings garnished with Ribbands and Beads and a number of small Brooches, which is very tastefully arranged'. B.51/e/1, fo. 16d.

even the very beads was not sent according to my request being a very irregular assortment.

March 28, Wednesday. Wind easterly with cloudy cold weather. The boat builders caulking the boats, Gilbert Laughton bending head timbers for canoes, tailors making clothing for the men, and the rest made 3800 lbs. pemmican for the journey down.

March 29, Thursday. Wind easterly a small breeze with cloudy weather. The smith making nails for the boats of iron hoops, the boat and canoe builders at their respective duties twelve men fell and hewed timber for the watch-house, and the rest variously employed.

March 30, Friday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear weather but cold sharp air. The smith repairing broken hatchets for trade, the rest as before.

March 31, Saturday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze weather as before. Gilbert Laughton and one man sawing gunwales for canoes, the rest cut firewood and brought home thirty-six pieces of timber for the watch-house. At 10 a.m. an Indian and his wife arrived, brought forty beaver. Late in the evening one of the free Canadians arrived, brought little or nothing with him.

April 1, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The Indians traded and went away.

April 2, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze clear cold weather. The tradesmen at their respective duties, ten men hewing stuff for the watch-houses, and the rest cut firewood.

April 3, Tuesday. Wind southerly and gentle breeze clear fine weather. The men employed as yesterday.

April 4, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men with horses hauling home oars, poles and yards for the boats, and the rest employed as on the preceding days.

April 5, Thursday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. Two men making a sail for one of the boats out of old canvas coverings of the packages, and the rest employed as on the preceding days. At 5 p.m. the free Canadian¹ went away and he informs me he cannot come in again before the middle of summer.

April 6, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with fine weather. The men employed as before. At 10 a.m. a young Indian arrived for a supply of tobacco and ammunition but brought nothing with him.

April 7, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men variously employed, the boat builders finished the boats all but the ceiling.

¹ 'The Cat'. See above and p. 132. The 'free Canadians' trading at the Company's house were doubtless former employees of the North West Company and other rivals who preferred remaining in the West to going to Montreal at the expiration of their contracts.

April 8, Sunday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy and clear alternately.

April 9, Monday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. The boat and canoe builders at their respective duties, tailors making clothing for the men, ten men began building a watch-house, and the rest clearing away the rubbish from within the works and burning it. At 4 p.m. an Indian arrived and brought so little with him that he could not pay any part of his debt.

April 10, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear with showers of hail. Sent twelve men to gather pitch, and the rest employed as yesterday. At 5 p.m. two Blood Indians came for tobacco.

April 11, Wednesday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The carpenters finished the two new boats: they are 25 feet of keel and nearly the same breadth as those built last year.¹ The rest employed as before. At 10 a.m. one tent of Blood Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

April 12,² Thursday. Wind SE a stiff gale weather part cloudy part clear. The carpenters repairing one of the boats built last year, canoe builders bending timbers, and the rest employed about various duty. The Indians traded the trifle they brought and went away. At 5 p.m. two Assinipoiet Indians arrived, brought only five small beaver.

April 13, Friday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. The men employed as yesterday.

April 14, Saturday. Wind and weather much the same. The men employed as on the preceding day, Gilbert Laughton finished bending timbers for five canoes. At 4 p.m. two Assinipoiet Indians arrived, brought a few furs.

April 15, Sunday. Wind in the east quarter with a continuance of cold blowing weather. The Indians traded the trifle they brought and went away.

April 16, Monday. Wind easterly a small breeze with cloudy weather. The tradesmen at their respective duties and the rest variously employed. Snowed much in the night.

April 17, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tradesmen employed as before and the rest made up 978 lbs. pemmican for the journey down.

April 18, Wednesday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with snow all day. The men carried firewood up the bank. At 5 p.m. an Indian arrived but brought nothing.

¹ P. xliii.

² For a copy of Tomison's letter of this date to Sutherland at Buckingham House, see p. 132.

April 19, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed within doors. At noon an Indian arrived, brought nothing.

April 20, Friday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with cloudy weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, eight men building a watch-house, and the rest doing jobs indoors. At 4 p.m. three Indians arrived, brought a few furs but could not pay half their credits; these used to bring 100 beaver each and now the three has only brought seventy-five made beaver in all. Gave them a supply and they went away again.

April 21, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with snow most part of the day and all last night. No working without doors.

April 22, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather. In the afternoon an Indian arrived, brought nothing.

April 23, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather. The carpenters repairing the boats, tailors making clothing for the men, eight men building a watch-house, and the rest preparing a place for building canoes on. Pruden and six men arrived from Buckingham House¹ with the horses to be kept here all summer, also brought two kegs of powder. At noon the river broke up and went away. At one p.m. an Indian man and family arrived, brought about four made beaver in furs and had seventy-four beaver in credit last autumn; this man did not use to bring less than 200 beaver in a season.

April 24, Tuesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze clear weather; the carpenters and tailors as before, the canoe builders put a canoe on the bed, and the rest employed at the watch-house and cutting a track through the ice to the river. The last night one of the Mowhawck Indians² arrived, brought fifty beaver.

April 25,³ Wednesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The men employed as yesterday; the carpenters finished repairing the two boats built last year. At noon an Indian arrived, brought a few martens with which he paid part of his credit, also at 7 p.m. another Indian arrived for the lend of a horse to bring in his winter's hunt.

¹ For a copy of the letter dated 19 April received from George Sutherland, see p. 132. Pruden and his companions had left Buckingham House on 20 April. B.24/a/5.

² The Mohawk was the most aggressive of the five nations forming the League of Iroquois. Hodge, *Handbook of Indians of Canada*, pp. 224-9, 307-12. Writing of the different classes of people employed before 1821 by the North West Company west of the Rocky Mountains Alexander Ross remarked, 'Among the people . . . are a set of civilized Indians from the neighbourhood of Montreal. These are chiefly of the Iroquois nation. . . . They are expert voyageurs but especially so in the rapids and dangerous runs in the inland waters, which they either stem or shoot with the utmost skill. The object of introducing them into the service of the traders was to make them act in the double capacity of canoe men and trappers. They are not esteemed equal to the ablest trappers, nor the best calculated for the voyage . . .'. Kenneth A. Spaulding, editor, *Alexander Ross. The Fur Hunters of the Far West* (University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1956), pp. 194-5. *Supra*, p. xci.

³ For Tomison's letter of this date to George Sutherland, see p. 133.

April 26, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes weather as yesterday, the boat builders making oars, the rest employed as before. In the evening a small party of Assinnepoiet Indians arrived, brought a little dried provisions which they traded and went away.

April 27, Friday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear weather, the men employed as yesterday. At noon a band of Southerd Indians arrived, above twenty able men in number, and brought no more than forty made beaver in furs and a small quantity of pounded meat and fat. Many of them had credits here last autumn but have not received any part of it from them they have been lying at a buffalo pound all the winter and neither have procured furs or provisions.¹

April 28, Saturday. Wind NW a small breeze with snow in the night and cold most part of the day. Could not work at canoe building, the rest employed as on the preceding day. Several Indians arrived from various quarters, brought little or nothing.

April 29, Sunday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with clear cold weather. Several more Indians arrived, brought about twenty made beaver.

April 30, Monday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze with cloudy weather. The boat builders making oars, the tailors making trousers for the men out of Russia sheeting² I brought out of England for my own use, but they being refused that article at the Rock House³ when down, and they could not do without them induced me to have it made and sold it to the men as Company's property. The canoe builders put a canoe on the bed, and the rest employed about various duty. In the evening some Indians arrived from the westward, brought a few beaver but not enough to pay some of their credits.

May 1, Tuesday. Wind westerly in the morning afterwards varied to the eastward cloudy weather with a little rain. The men employed as yesterday. The Indians still drunk.

May 2, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. The men employed about various duty. In the evening several Indians of various tribes arrived, brought a few furs and a little provisions.

May 3, Thursday. Wind between NE and east cloudy weather with snow all day. No working without doors. Traded with several Indians and in the evening put them across the river.

¹ See p. 133.

² The continuing war had no doubt caused Russia duck or sheeting to be in short supply. Colen attributed the refusal of eleven time-expired men to renew their contracts in 1797 not only to the distress suffered for want of sufficient provisions during 1796-97, but also to the lack of necessary clothing, especially the duck trousers, so much needed by the men inland. B.239/b/79, fos. 21d.-22; B.239/a/100, 17 July 1797.

³ I.e. Gordon House.

May 4, Friday. Wind northerly a small breeze with cloudy cold weather. The carpenters finished making thirty oars for the boats, also masts and yards, could do nothing towards canoe building, the rest planted a few potatoes and finished the blockhouses floors excepted. Several Indians pitched away.

May 5, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The carpenters sewing strong parchment round that part of the [word missing] that is most exposed to labour; the rest made up 532 lbs. pemmican. In the evening two Assinnepoiet Indians arrived, brought a trifle of provisions which they traded and went away.

May 6, Sunday. Wind in the south quarter a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. In the evening one tent of Southerd Indians arrived, brought a few furs, and some others pitched away.

May 7, Monday. Wind variable with fine clear weather. The carpenters repairing the little boat, canoe builders timbering canoes, and the rest digging the ground and planting potatoes. At noon a few Swampy Ground Indians arrived, brought a few furs which was not sufficient to pay one half of their credits. Those that arrived yesterday all drunk.

May 8, Tuesday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. The boat builders repairing the bateaux, tailors making Indian clothing, canoe builders timbering a canoe, and the rest finished the blockhouses and did other jobs. The Indians still drunk.

May 9, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday a strong breeze with clear hot weather. The boat and canoe builders employed as before and the rest packed sixty bundles of furs.

May 10, Thursday. Wind variable fresh breezes weather for the most part cloudy. The men employed as on the preceding day, finished repairing the bateaux as also of building four canoes built by Gilbert Laughton, John Flett and John Mowat; they had everything prepared for a fifth one but the birchrind is so very bad that they could not make a canoe out of it. I was surprised to find in the list of servants Robert Garrock the first¹ and John Sebeston² was rated as canoe-builders for some years back, but your honours will please to observe that those men are so far from being capable of doing that duty that neither of the two ever was capable

¹ Robert Garrock, 1st, like Robert Garrock, 2nd (p. 34, n. 2), came from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands. He joined the Company as a labourer in 1782 when about 20 years of age but was taken prisoner at York Factory by the French under La Pérouse shortly after arrival there and so was obliged to re-engage in 1783. He accompanied Philip Turnor, Malchom Ross and Peter Fidler on their journey 'from Cumberland House . . . towards the Athapiscow Country and back to York Factory', 1790-92. A. 32/3, fo. 80. See also J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 327, 491.

² John Sebeston (Sabbeston) of 'Warrs' (?Wyre), Orkney Islands, who was born about 1759 and joined the Company in 1781. A. 30/8, fo. 37.

to mend the canoe they were in without assistance. This shows great partiality to some undeserving servants and those that are deserving are neglected.

May 11, Friday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with clear weather. The men employed at the press packed sixty bundles. At 5 p.m. a few Stone Indians arrived, brought a few beaver which is not sufficient to pay half of their credits.

May 12, Saturday. Wind WNW a strong breeze weather as yesterday. The canoe builders repairing the old canoes and the rest employed at the press and pitching canoes. Packed thirty-seven bundles of furs. The Indians traded and went away, four men brought no more than seventy-two made beaver.

May 13, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. In the evening five Sussue Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

May 14, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men variously employed. Yesterday several of the Bungee Indians arrived at the Canadian house on account of McGillivrey¹ having seized all their furs which they intended to pay their credits with at this place. Finding the Company's property was seized on the road, I sent John Peter Pruden to inform Duncan McGillivrey that he had robbed the Indians and made them thieves by not allowing them to pay their credits, which with others he has intercepted this season amounts to about 500 beaver. I sent a second time but was still refused and would not suffer a skin to go out of the house. At noon the Sussew Indians went away, five men brought no more than seventeen skins.

May 15, Tuesday. Wind in the west quarter fresh breezes with warm weather. The men employed pitching canoes and packing the remaining part of the furs.

May 16, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. The men variously employed. At noon one Indian and his family arrived, brought 100 made beaver which he traded and went away.

May 17, Thursday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with very warm weather. The men watering canoes and getting everything ready for embarking.

May 18, Friday. Wind variable fresh breezes with hazy weather. Embarked sixteen men in eight canoes loaded with thirty-two bags of pemmican and 104 bundles of furs. The rest preparing for embarking tomorrow. The country all round on fire, no less than eight Indians has been burned to death within the last ten days.

May 19, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At 10 a.m. embarked the four boats with the remainder of the furs and

¹ For Tomison's letter of this date to Duncan McGillivray, see p. 134.

provisions. Have left James Gaddy¹ in charge of the house with eleven men more. Rained and snowed all the afternoon.

May 20, Sunday. Wind as yesterday weather part cloudy part clear. At half past 7 a.m. we proceeded and at half past 7 p.m. put up.

May 21, Monday. Wind as before blowed fresh with clear weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and at 1 p.m. arrived at Buckingham House where I found all well thank God. Mr Sutherland has done everything in his power to increase the trade at this place which is something better than last year of such as could be procured at this place.

May 22, Tuesday. Wind westerly squally weather with showers of rain in the evening. Fixed the men to canoes and boats till they came to Cumberland House and had some difficulty to do it for want of steersmen.

May 23, Wednesday. Wind westerly a strong breeze with clear weather. At 8 a.m. sent off four canoes in order to provide meat against the others comes up.

May 24, Thursday. Wind ESE a moderate breeze with clear weather. At 8 a.m. embarked nine canoes, two men in each canoe, and at 10 embarked the four boats manned with twenty-two men. Have left Mr Hallet in charge of Buckingham House and six men more. I wished Mr George Sutherland to have stayed up all summer but he would not consent for which cause I know not.²

May 25, Friday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 3 a.m. we proceeded and sailed most part of the day. Distance near ninety miles, put up at a quarter past 8 p.m.

May 26, Saturday. Wind as yesterday and blowed fresh. At 3 p.m. we proceeded and at eleven obliged to put ashore as the men could not work the boats in the river. At 6 p.m. put off again as the wind fell more moderate, at half past 7 put up to wait for three canoes that did not come up.

May 27, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes clear fine weather. At half past 3 a.m. we embarked and at noon came up with four canoes that went ahead, at 7 p.m. put up at the Crossing Place. Stopped several times to-day in search of buffalo but had little success.

May 28, Monday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with clear weather. At half past 3 a.m. we embarked and at half past 7 p.m. put up a little above the South Branch. Killed two red deer and two buffalo bulls, all very poor.

May 29, Tuesday. Wind variable from SE to west a fresh breeze with thunder and a little rain towards evening. At 4 a.m. we embarked, and at eight arrived at Carleton House where we found Mr James Bird and those with him all well thank God, the trade very poor but not less than

¹ James Gaddy, senior.

² See pp. xlvii-viii.

expected owing to the Indians having deserted that place last summer and did no good where they went more than to this place.¹

May 30, Wednesday. Wind WSW a small breeze with clear weather. At 8 a.m. we embarked and at half past 7 p.m. then put up. Left Magnus Twat² in charge of Carleton House and five men more.

May 31, Thursday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and 7 p.m. put up at the little river above Cumberland House.

June 1, Friday. Wind WSW a small breeze with clear fine weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 6 arrived at Cumberland House where we found all well thank God, but like the settlements above a very small trade, which is not strange as no Indians has stayed by this place for some years past.³

June 2, Saturday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze clear fine weather. At noon Mr James Bird and his party arrived.

June 3, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Settling men to the canoes and boats but find it very difficult as there is only two men to a canoe and many of them not very capable.

June 4, Monday. Wind variable in the north quarter light breezes, weather as before. The men pitching and watering canoes ready for embarking tomorrow God willing.

June 5, Tuesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze clear weather. Did not embark the canoes as the wind blowed in head.

June 6, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with very warm weather. Embarked eighteen canoes, twelve of which has only two men each.

June 7, Thursday. Wind NE weather part cloudy part clear. At 4 a.m. embarked with the four boats, left Mr Fiddler and two men at Cumberland House. Rowed till half past 7 p.m. then put up.

June 8, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we embarked and rowed till 8 p.m. then put up.

June 9, Saturday. Wind and weather as on the preceding day. At 3 a.m. we proceeded and rowed till 8 p.m. then put up, three parts through the Cedar Lake.

June 10, Sunday. Wind SE a moderate breeze with hazy weather. At

¹ Bird's competitor was a Mr Mackenzie. B.49/a/28, 3 November 1797, 27 March 1798.

² For a biographical note on the Orkneyman Magnus Twatt, see Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 237, n. 2. Numerous references to him will also be found in *H.B.R.S.*, XIV and XV. See also Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. 39.

³ Peter Fidler appears not to have had any competition at Cumberland House during the winter of 1797-98 because, after leaving some goods in his care, the Canadians left for 'the Nippowee' on 3 October in order to avoid a repetition of the near-starvation from which they had suffered during the preceding season. B.49/a/28.

3 a.m. we proceeded to the Great Fall and got all over by 4 p.m. and run down and put up where the canoes was waiting for us.

June 11, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we proceeded through the Great Lake where we sailed and rowed all day and night.

June 12, Tuesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze towards evening. At 1 a.m. we got out of the lake and at noon got to Jack River House where we stopped a few hours and embarked six men and one bundle of furs. Little or no trade at this place.¹ Left Mr Isham and three men to take care of the little trading goods and provisions left by the boats and canoes for their return.

June 13, Wednesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze hazy weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked, sailed and rowed till 8 p.m. then put up half way through Eachewemames.

June 14, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we proceeded with some difficulty to get through for want of water which detained us some time to dam in the water for the return of the boats.² At half past 9 p.m. put up on the White Fall.

June 15, Friday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze cloudy weather with showers of rain. At 4 a.m. the men began carrying and at 5 p.m. got the boats and all over.

June 16, Saturday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. At 3 a.m. we proceeded for the Hill Carrying Place where we arrived at 6 and by 12 got all over. At 1 p.m. passed by a Canadian house which was built last fall at the Side Pine³ and traded with the Homeguard Indians from York. At 8 p.m. put up on the last carrying place in Wipinna Pannis River.⁴

June 17, Sunday. Wind NW a gentle breeze with cloudy weather. At 2 a.m. we embarked and at 1 p.m. arrived at the head of the Trout River where we put up. Mr Bird and self went to look out for timber to build a house which is much wanted at this place.⁵

¹ At Colen's Cot, Jack River, Isham was opposed by Mr McKay (presumably William McKay who was there during 1796-97). His trade, according to the York Factory account book, was 833 made beaver (expenses 482 made beaver), but according to Colen, 1015 made beaver. Besides competing against McKay, Isham opposed John Richards (p. 200, n. 3) who was at 'the Side Pine' above Oxford Lake. Isham had neither men nor goods to send there. According to Indian report it was the intention of the Canadians to remove from the Side Pine in the summer of 1798 to Holy (Oxford) Lake. B.154/a/2, 21 and 24 September 1797; B.239/d/115, fo. 67; B.239/b/79, fo. 22d.; B.239/b/66, fos. 34d., 37d.; E.3/1, fos. 75-6.

² Cf. p. lxxxviii.

³ Above Oxford (Holy Lake). B.239/b/66, fos. 34d., 37d. See p. 63, n. 7. From sketches made by Peter Fidler it appears that the Canadian post Side Pine was on the right bank of Hayes River near the eastern end of Opiminegoka Lake. Fidler stated that the post, in charge of 'one Richards a Canadn.', operated for one season only. He was in error, however, in giving the year of building as 1799. E.3/1, fos. 75-6.

⁴ They were travelling on the Hayes River between Windy and Oxford Lakes.

⁵ The eastern end of Oxford Lake where Oxford House was established later in the season. See

June 18, Monday. Wind northerly a gentle breeze first part cloudy latter part clear. Gilbert Laughton and four men repairing a canoe that was left here last year, the boat builder and one man collecting stuff for oars for the boats, and the rest fell and collected above 100 pieces of timber, thirty of which were rafted to the place where the house are intended to be built.

June 19, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes with cloudy weather. First part of the day the men employed loading three of the boats with stones which I think will be better than filling them with water. In the evening sent off ten canoes so that we should not encumber one another on the carrying places.

June 20, Wednesday. Wind easterly a small breeze with rain in the forenoon. At 1 p.m. embarked and proceeded down Trout River and put up a little way through the Knee Lake.

June 21, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes hazy weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and paddled till half past 7 p.m. then put up on the second carrying place in Pike River.

June 22, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with thunder. At 3 a.m. we embarked, paddled and carried till 6 p.m. then put up.

June 23, Saturday. Wind as yesterday with cloudy weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and at half past 8 arrived at Gordon House where we found Mr Colen and his party all well.¹

June 24, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Mr Colen settled with those men whose times are expired, many of which are intended for home.²

p. 171, n. 2. The Indian name, *panipawa nipi*, means a hole through the earth, so called from a deep spot near the lower end. *Place-Names of Manitoba* (Ottawa, Geographic Board of Canada, 1933), p. 66. Whitford at Gordon House and William Sinclair, the first master of Oxford House, referred to the lake as Holy or Holly Lake. B.239/b/66, fos. 34d., 42d.; B.156/a/1, fo. 3. Colen arranged with George Sutherland in the summer of 1797 for a house to be built 'in the neighbourhood of Pathepow a Neppée (or Deep Water Lake) in order to be a Check on the Canadians and prevent them enticing away York home Guards', and in the fall mentioned to Tomison his intention of accompanying the men inland in spring 1798 purposely to build the proposed storehouse in the neighbourhood of Deep Water Lake. He met with disapproval and Tomison 'almost put a negative' to Colen going beyond the Rock. B.239/b/66, fo. 36. It was finally settled that Tomison and George Sutherland should select the spot. *Ibid.*, fo. 43.

¹ Colen, accompanied by twenty-three 'Englishmen' and thirteen natives had left York Factory on 15 June and had arrived at Gordon House on the 21st. He found that place short of provisions because the nearby Canadians had collected all the meat from the Indians immediately the animals were killed. B.239/a/101. Colen's journal entry for 23 June 1798 mentioned: 'Messrs. Tomison, [George] Sutherland, Ross, Bird, Oman, [Thomas] Swain, Pruden and the 3d James Sutherland accompanied by 82 Men in 23 large Canoes loaded with furs arrived. Trade up the Saskatchewan much less than last year occasioned by the deceptions between the Canadian Officers and Mr Tomison & the former stopping the Bungees from paying their Credits to the latter. Other officers up that River have made good returns'. B.239/a/101. In a letter written on the same day to James Sutherland (Shipping Officer) and James Tate at York Factory Colen mentioned that Tomison had left four boats at the head of Trout River and men were preparing wood there to build a storehouse. B.239/b/66, fo. 45.

² Colen recorded: 'Called Council to Engage Men and entered a few into Contract Many positively

June 25, Monday. Wind and weather much the same as on the preceding days. Settled with those men who goes in the boats and overhauled eight chests of guns many of which are very indifferent. Gilbert Laughton oiled 140 guns, cleaned them, and packed them in cases for inland.¹

June 26, Tuesday. Wind northerly cloudy weather with rain a great part of the day. At 7 a.m. Mr Colen embarked for York and has left me a very difficult task to fit out the canoes. At noon the rain ceased, loaded two boats with 144 bundles of furs and sent them off for York. Want of proper necessities for the men makes them very difficult to place [*sic* ?please].²

June 27, Wednesday. Little wind northerly clear weather. The men repairing canoes and repacking bundles, there being many articles in them not fit for inland trade. The want of cotton shirts, trousers, blue common cloth, frocks, duck and several other necessities³ for the men causes great dissatisfaction.

June 28, Thursday. Wind in the NW quarter light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. The men employed as yesterday. Fitted out seven canoes in order to proceed tomorrow, God willing.

June 29, Friday. Wind in the NE quarter a fresh breeze with a continual rain. Could forward no business either without or within doors, the houses being so leaky that it is a difficult matter to keep the property from being damaged.

June 30, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Laid out the cargoes of fifteen canoes but a very indifferent assortment and divided the provisions which I am sorry to say was very scanty, being 56 gallons of

refuse the Company's terms . . . Prevailed on Mr Bird to return Inland, who entered into Contract. He complains very much on the unpleasantness of his situation the last year on account of the conduct of men who have again taken on them the superior Command'. B.239/a/101.

¹ Colen's journal entry for this day referred to canoes taking cargoes to Trout River from whence the goods were to be taken inland by boats. He also mentioned that proper canoes were chosen to send goods from Gordon House to the storehouse to be built 'at Deep Water Lake' (Oxford Lake). B.239/a/101.

² Colen recorded: 'Having settled all Inland Concerns, and finished every thing appearantly to the satisfaction of Mr Tomison, who undertook to sort & lay out Canoe Cargoes, Had Boats loaded with furs and about Seven AM embarked for YF accompanied by Mr George Sutherland & family leaving Messrs Ross, Bird, Howse, [Thomas] Swain & Pruden & young [James] Sutherland [3rd] to assist Mr Tomison to lay out Cargoes &c for all the Canoes brought down this Season'. B.239/a/101.

³ For example, the 'Smock Frocks' and trousers issued to the men in order 'to Preserve their Cloaths' while digging drains at York Factory in the spring of 1795, and for use 'when they track the Boats to Gordon House after the river breaks'. B.239/a/97, fo. 20-20d. David Thompson described the Company's men as wearing 'a coarse hat; tight blue jacket with leather trowsers and shoes, to which in winter was added a leather coat', and Canadians as having 'long red or blue caps, half of which hung down the head; . . . grey capots or blanket coats belted round their waist, their trowsers of grey cloth or dressed leather and their shoes the same'. Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

oatmeal short, flour, rice and barley etc. In the evening seven canoes embarked for Jack River and Cumberland House.¹

William Tomison

Correspondence

William Tomison to Joseph Colen

Gordon House

6 August [September] 1797²

Dear Sir, I cannot pass this opportunity without giving you my repeated wishes of enjoying a pleasant and happy winter. Sir, I am sorry to inform you that many packages rests here that the canoes brought from the factory and left here³ by Mr Sutherland, Fiddler and Ross,⁴ as also all the steel and iron bars, hatchets etc. and a strict order for all to be brought up in the fall by Mr Oman; this orders you know I never can comply with, for I believe you never heard that Tommison ever took a piece of goods from the factory and left it by the way, or got another man to carry it for him neither did he load his canoe with necessaries for himself⁵ and left the Company's goods behind. All the twine for Cumberland House I have taken which was in No. 5 and 6, also the most part of what you sent for Mr Bird; as to anything else we cannot take, the parcel J.C. which was left also. I find there is two pieces of goods left on

¹ For Tomison's journal beginning on the next day, see p. 135.

² Tomison landed at York Factory on 24 August 1797, left for inland on 2 September and reached Gordon House on 6 September following. B.239/a/100; B.81/a/3. There is a copy of this letter (also incorrectly dated) in the correspondence book kept at York Factory (B.239/b/66, fo. 28-28d.) and one in the correspondence book sent to London in 1797 (B.239/b/59, fos. 46d.-47). Extracts from George Sutherland's letter (10 August 1798) and Malchom Ross's letter (20 September 1798) to Tomison referring to his 'most ungenerous letter to Mr Colen' are on pp. xliii, xlvi, xlix and below n. 5, p. 127, n. 2.

³ Colen's marginal comment in the copy sent to London: 'The articles here mentioned were sent up by Boats a steersman & Bowsman was taken Ill at Gordon House obliged many Bundles to be [left] there. The Men are now at this place unable to perform duty viz. William Budge Thomas Strickler'. B.239/b/59, fo. 46d.

⁴ Malchom Ross. See p. xlix et seq.

⁵ Referring to this remark in his letter to Tomison of 10 August 1798, George Sutherland reminded him that owing to the shortage of provisions at York in 1797 the usual quantities could not be taken inland and continued, 'but perhaps you allude to my Keg of salt and I dare say you do not think me deserving even of *this article* . . . probably you may allude to the small Box of crockery ware which I brought from England some years ago and carried up last Summer. I freely confess that this was a great innovation on our Inland customs. Yet I cannot help thinking it rather beneath the Dignity of the Honble. Hudsons Bay Company that their Inland Master should ask the Gentlemen from Canada who are his neighbours to take a *glass of wine* or a *Cup of Tea* out of a *tin pot* more especially as when they treat us we see Silver, China, and Glass on the Table . . .'. B.239/b/60, fos. 36d.-37; *supra*, p. xlvi.

account of carrying Thompson's things¹ up which I think must in the first place be a very great imposition on you and a much greater on the honourable Company, for in my opinion that man that would have been a carrier for so base a man as Thompson ought to have both his ears cut off which I should not have scrupled at had he been my brother.² I am sorry to say that matters has gone to a great length this year which I must confess will not be allowed another year let the consequence be what it may. You will please not to have any bundles packed for next year with one single article of any sort whatever not less than six nor more than twelve; knives, handkerchiefs, files, bayonets excepted which may be more. So conclude with wishing the compliments of the season to attend you and all under your command and remains dear Sir your most obedient humble servant, William Tomison.

P.S. My most respectful compliments to the gentlemen of your mess.

William Tomison to Robert Longmoor³

Great Lake⁴

21 September 1797

Sir, This is to inform you that I embarked nine pieces of goods from York to Swan River, but on my arrival at the Jack River House I found that

¹ Colen's marginal comment in the copy sent to London: 'Mr Thompsons parcels were sent to the Rock Store in Boats last Spring [1797] it was not known that he had left the Service before Augt.'. B.239/b/59, fo. 47. These parcels reached York Factory by the supply-ship which arrived there on 20 August 1796 and so were too late by several weeks to be taken by Malchom Ross to Thompson at Fairford House (see p. liv). After leaving the Company to join the Canadians, David Thompson wrote from Reindeer River to the council at York Factory (1 June 1797) for his 'Books, Mathematical Instruments &c &c' to be sent to Cumberland House or, if this was thought to be not consistent with their duty, to reship them to England. See B.239/b/59, fos. 37d.-38, and Glover, *op. cit.*, p. xxxviii. According to the book of 'Servants Commissions' 1787-1802 (A.16/111, fos. 31, 35, 35d., 36), the parcels sent to Thompson contained: '4 foot Aromatick telescope' (£12 12s. od.); '2 Eye tubes to do.' (£2 2s. od.); 'a Brass Stand' (£3 3s. od.); '6 In. Case Instruments' (£6 16s. 6d.); '1 pr. 4½ In. Compasses' (7s. 6d.); '1 pr. 7 In. do.' (£1 1s. od.); 'Glasses p. Sextant' (10s. 6d.); a watch, keys and glasses repaired for 16s. 6d.; and sundry (unlisted) books costing £12 11s. od. He was also sent *Nautical Almanacs* for 1797, 1798 and 1799 costing 10s. 6d.

² B.239/b/60, fo. 37, George Sutherland to William Tomison, York Factory, 10 August 1798, 'I am glad I was not concerned in the affair for which you threaten to mutilate some of the Officers and this I consider as a fortunate circumstance for my poor ears'. *Ibid.*, fos. 44-5, Malchom Ross to Tomison, York Factory, 20 September 1798, '... you say there was two pieces of Trading goods left behind on account of David Thompson's Books and Telescope I deny that charge. . . David Thompsons things hardly was the weight of a piece of Trading goods it went up in the Canoe I was in . . . you said you would not scruple to cut off the Ears from the person who committed the above Transgression why did you Scruple it when you saw me at Cumberland House last spring otherwise there was on the passage down good time for doing such a Job as you had it in your power often to have caught me on sleep as I verry well knew you would not attemp it when awake'.

³ Longmoor was en route to Carlton House, Assiniboine River. He entered a copy of Tomison's letter in his journal on 7 October 1797. B.28/a/4.

⁴ Lake Winnipeg.

Isham [MS: Asham] was destitute of several articles which I never expected being so near to the factory; but this I must confess is not his fault as he had no canoe left him neither had he a man to take care of the house in his absence. Otherwise he certainly would had time enough to gone to the Rock and brought up what he wanted. There is a canoe left at the head of Trout River that with a little repairs would have gone two trips between that place and the Rock House. I was also much surprised on my arrival at the Rock House to find so many packages resting there which I was informed were inland; it is inland to be sure, but not out of the smell of the factory. You will receive enclosed a list of goods brought up and left at the Jack River House as also what I have sent you by this conveyance which I hope you will be frugal in the expenditure thereof as every article becomes very dear in England and therefore it is the duty of every man that are entrusted with the Company's property to pay the greatest attention to their interest. So conclude with wishing you a plentiful winter and a good trade and remains Sir, your most obedient humble servant, William Tomison.

George Sutherland to William Tomison

Buckingham House

26 November 1797¹

Sir, we arrived here on the 23rd instant where I found all well except the two men² who were ill when you left this place: they both continue in the same weak state, and there is no medicine fit for them here; they are troubled night and day with a violent cough and are reduced to mere skeletons. Shall be glad if you will send a little blister plaster and Spanish flies³ by the first opportunity, also a little opium for composing them to rest; there are some in a phial in the old cupboard.

You will receive the articles sent as per enclosed list. The buffalo begin to be pretty plentiful about the Big Hill and there is some meat in the house, also some beat meat and fat with 451 made beaver in furs. Wishing you a plentiful winter, I am Sir your humble servant, Geo. Sutherland.

¹ Tomison received this letter on 3 December. See p. 104.

² The invalids were Benjamin Bruce and Donald Moat. B.24/a/5, 24 November 1797. Bruce recovered (4 February 1798) but Moat died on 8 December 1797. *Ibid.*

³ Cantharides, the pharmacopoeial name of the dried beetle *Cantharis vesicatoria* or Spanish Fly. An agent for raising blisters. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

4 December 1797¹

Dear Sir, By the arrival of the four men on the 3rd instant I received your kind favour of the 26th November as also every article as per list enclosed. It gave me pleasure to hear of your safe arrival at Buckingham House. But sorry to hear that the two men still continue very ill: I am very sensible there is no medicines with you that are of any benefit to them and I believe you know there is as little here, nay there is hardly so much rag as would dress a wound four times. I have sent by this conveyance what tincture of opium there is here, some Spanish flies and two parts of the blister plaster. We have had no Indians since you left this except a small band of Fall Indians: these brought about 130 wolves and as many foxes which is not of the best quality; and as to provisions we are just able to keep the wolf from the door. So conclude with wishing you a pleasant winter and success to the honourable Company's affairs and remains Dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

George Sutherland to William Tomison

Buckingham House

7 February 1798

Sir, Mr Hallet expressing a wish to visit you gives me an opportunity of returning you thanks for the things you sent down with the Canadians all of which I received safe. For the news of this place I refer you to the bearer. If any Indians should come here in the spring we will be short of cloth, hatchets and mens knives. I will therefore be obliged to you for two pieces of the former and as many of the latter as you can spare, and am dear Sir your very humble servant, Geo. Sutherland.

P.S. You may depend upon it I will send out for our debts when our neighbours does.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

25 February 1798²

Dear Sir, Your kind favour of the 7th instant I received on the 13th which gave me pleasure to hear that you and all under your direction

¹ This letter and the medicines it refers to were apparently carried to Buckingham House by Canadians, but no reference to their receipt is to be found in the Buckingham House journal, B.24/a/5.

² This letter, which left Edmonton on 1 March, was received on 7 March, B.24/a/5.

enjoyed a middling state of health which blessing thank God we all here enjoy.

As yet we have got no stock of meat and not above 100 lbs. pounded meat, fat a much lesser quantity and but little prospect of any quantity being brought in this season notwithstanding every encouragement has been given.

I have sent by this conveyance the following articles viz. cloth blue corded yards $23\frac{1}{2}$, red cord 22 yds., knives yew handled 36, box [handled] butcher 24, and common clasp 12, being all that can be spared and I am sorry I could not send you some hatchets: there would have been none in the house had not 26 come up in the fall and at present no more than 20 remains and 100 more would not be too many.

Tobacco also is very short, no more than seven rolls, and powder only five kegs, which is too little for the number of Indians that has not been in. What trade has come in since your departure from this is come from the Blackfoot, Fall and Blood Indians. The Sussew and Southerd Indians has done little or nothing. So conclude with wishing success to the honourable Company's affairs and I am dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

P.S. The Iroquois [MS: Eriques]¹ you gave credit to brought in here in the night some time ago by their account amount of seventy-five beaver in martens, beaver and bad otters, the former without tails and the latter without heads, which furs I determined to deliver to them when they come in as I will not give them carriage.

It will be necessary to build a watch-house on the SW corner and pull the old one down, and as William Flett is on the list as canoe builder I shall expect he will with assistance put the canoes in proper repair otherwise he cannot be entitled to canoe builder's wages, and was it not for that same very reason I would ordered him up here. W.T.

George Sutherland to William Tomison

Buckingham House

3 March 1798

Dear Sir, Mr Hallet with two men left this place the 9th of last month on a visit to you, but they have not yet returned which makes me fearful they have met with some accident.²

There have been no Indians here since my last except four Blackfoot,

¹ See p. 117, n. 2.

² Hallett arrived back at Buckingham House on 7 March. See p. 111, n. 2.

young men who came to beg tobacco: they say the snow is too deep for horses or dogs to travel.

Enclosed is a letter from Mr Bird,¹ the Frenchmen having arrived from below two days ago.

I am sorry to [inform] you of the death of Thomas Isbaster² at Carlton House. Ben. Bruice³ gets better and I am not without hopes that he will get over it. Our neighbours have not sent out to any Indians as yet as they have been none in nor do they know where to find them till they come, when you may depend on my sending likewise as we have an equal right. Wishing you health and plenty I am dear Sir your humble servant, Geo. Sutherland.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

20 March 1798⁴

Dear Sir, Yours of the 3rd instant I received on the 15 by which I was happy to hear that you and all under your direction was well which blessing we all here enjoy thank God.

It gives me infinite pleasure to hear that Benj. Bruice is much better and in a fair way of recovery but at the same time sorry to hear of the death of Thomas Isbaster at Carleton House, but God's will be done.

We have had no Indians in since my last except part of the Blood and Muddy River Indians which in all made a large band to the number of eighty-three able men and about four times as many women and children. Twenty-three was rigged which has shortened several articles: hatchets we have none at all, no common hats and was obliged to give three of the best before I could finish the number, powder and tobacco is also very short, no more than 3 rolls in the house and powder three kegs. No Southerd Indians as yet has been in and many of the Blood and Stone Indians also.

On the 16th we got home the last of our meat and this day I have paid off our hunters but as to our dried stock we are as yet far short. I hope Mr Hallet and his party arrived safe in due time, his long stay here was partly owing to his ill state of health and partly the badness of the weather.

¹ Neither the original nor a copy of this letter has been traced.

² Thomas Isbaster (Isbister) from 'Harrow' (Harray, Mainland), Orkney Islands, was listed as a canoe man. He was born about 1773 and joined the Company in 1792. He was found dead in bed at Carlton House on 30 December 1797, the cause being, it was thought, 'the bursting of an Abcess which had formed in his Lungs'. A.32/5, fo. 178; A.30/8, fo. 34; B.27/a/3.

³ Benjamin Bruce (Bruice), steersman, at £18 per annum, from 'Warrs' (?Wyre), Orkney Islands. He joined the Company in 1789 when about 18 years of age. A.30/8, fo. 29.

⁴ The receipt of this letter is not mentioned in the Buckingham House journal, B.24/a/5.

So conclude wishing success to the Company's affairs health and happiness to you and all under your command and remains dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

12 April 1798

Dear Sir, Being short of powder and tobacco at this place induces me to inform you thereof so that you may have an opportunity to send up what you can spare by the return of Prudent and some others that may be spared from your place, also all the horses, those excepted that are wanted for summer use. I had an account yesterday of a large band of Blackfoot Indians, as also Blood Indians, coming in here but whether they may come here or go below is uncertain; no Southerd Indians has been in as yet and very few Stone Indians. Guns, powder, tobacco and hatchets being the only articles wanted during the winter has been the cause of our running short in those articles, but at the same time powder, tobacco, hatchets and hats much deficient. The Cat, a free Frenchman, has been in but did not bring a skin with him and is not to come in before the middle of summer, so by that means their credits as well as many others will remain unpaid. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and happiness to you and all under your command, and remains dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

George Sutherland to William Tomison

Buckingham House

19 April 1798

Dear Sir, Yours of the 12th came to hand on the 17th. The same day a tribe of Blackfoot Indians came in who brought upwards of 500 beaver in wolves and foxes with a little fat, but no pounded meat. They reduced our stock of tobacco to about 15 lbs., consequently I cannot send you any of that article; have sent two kegs of powder and five hat with a loaf of sugar as I hear you are short of that article. Six men accompanies Mr Pruden with all the horses except one horse and four mares belonging the Company which will be required to bring meat to the house in the summer. We have made twenty-seven bags of pemmican being all the beat meat.

I shall be glad to know the weight of the bundles as also whether the fur or pelt side of the skins to be outwards. I have spoke to the Little Old

Man to take bark for mending the canoes but the spring is very backwards here as there still continue a deal of snow even on the plantation. Wishing you a pleasant spring I am dear Sir your humble servant, Geo. Sutherland.

William Tomison to George Sutherland

Edmonton House

25 April 1798¹

Dear Sir, Your kind favour of the 19th instant I received on the 23rd by the arrival of Mr Pruden and party all safe, three horses excepted which they lost on the road. Very few Indians has been in since my last and as little they have brought. Mad MacKay² came in the other day and brought about forty made beaver which will not pay half of his debt and is the whole he has brought during the winter.

We have made sixty bags of pemmican and there is not a grain of pounded meat in the house and not much fat; had you been able to have made as much it would even then been little enough but what we are to do I know not as there is no prospect of any coming in, notwithstanding as great encouragement has been given this year as ever I gave, but many of the Indians say that the provisions was so plenty here last year that they was turned out of the houses with their provisions and they are determined to make us go on scanty allowance this year,³ and so it appears for all the Southerd Indians on the south side the river was at two buffalo pounds until lately, thirty-two tents in number, and they have not brought a pound of provisions to either of the houses nor a skin of any kind.

You will please to pack the pelt side of the skins outwards and the weight of 76 lbs. each bundle. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and happiness to you and all under your command, and remains dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

¹ The receipt of this letter is not mentioned in the Buckingham House journal, B.24/a/5.

² Presumably a 'free' Canadian. He should not be confused with Donald McKay (p. 11, n. 1) who was also known as 'Mad McKay'. Donald and his brother John joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1791. By April 1798 Donald McKay had become disgruntled and was passing his time at Churchill waiting for a passage to England.

³ See p. 85.

William Tomison to Duncan McGillivray

Copy of a letter sent to Mr William [Duncan] McGillivray, Canadian Master at this place.

Edmonton House

14 May 1798

Sir, This morning being informed by several of the Bungee Indians that arrived at your house yesterday or more properly by seizing their furs which they wished to pay their credits with, as also several more which you have intercepted this season, not less than 500 beaver that now rests in your house, which is [as] much the honourable Hudsons Bay Company's property as anything belonging them under my care.

Sir, you will please to recollect the letter you sent me last November¹ on my arrival at this place which condemns your present proceedings. I again put myself to the trouble to demand the Company's property by sending Mr John Prudent, Mr James Sutherland² and James Gaddy. If refused I shall be induced to report you to the Honourable Hudsons Bay Company as a gentleman of the first rank. I remain yours, William Tomison.

P.S. This goes to the honourable Hudsons Bay Company, accompanied by the letter I received from you last November.

¹ See p. xlv.

² James Sutherland, referred to as 3rd when he joined the Hudson's Bay Company to distinguish him from James Sutherland 2nd (p. 164), and James Sutherland 1st, the 'Landing & Shipping Officer & Storekeeper' at York Factory (A.30/8-10). James Sutherland 3rd came from South Ronaldsay and was about 20 years of age in 1797 when, as a writer at £15 per annum, he sailed to York in the *King George*. William Tomison returned to Hudson Bay by the same ship and it must have been on his instructions that Sutherland spent his first year in the fur trade up the Saskatchewan River, probably at Edmonton House, instead of remaining at the Bay-side as was customary with new recruits. A.30/8, fo. 38; B.239/a/100, 24 August and 2 September 1797; B.239/a/101, 23 June 1798. Sutherland became a Chief Factor under the Deed Poll of 1821, following the coalition with the North West Company. For biographical information, see *H.B.R.S.*, I, 469-70, and Ernest W. Marwick, 'Chief Factor James Sutherland and his Orkney correspondence' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), Winter 1966, pp. 44-51.

JOURNAL OF WILLIAM TOMISON

1798-1799

A Diary of the Occurrences and Transactions kept at Edmonton House, North America, by William Tomison, Chief Factor for the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company.

1798

July 1, Sunday. Wind in the east quarter a light breeze with cloudy weather. At 8 a.m. embarked three canoes and at 5 p.m. embarked with five canoes and left the rest to come away tomorrow.¹

July 2, Monday. Wind variable with cloudy weather. At 6 a.m. we embarked and paddled etc. till 7 p.m. then put up.

July 3, Tuesday. Wind NW squally weather with heavy showers of rain. Obligated to lay by most part of the day.

July 4, Wednesday. Wind northerly weather much the same as yesterday, but not so heavy rain. At 4 a.m. we proceeded, at noon got out of Hill River and passed by those that went from the Rock two days before us, at 8 p.m. put up in Pike River.

July 5, Thursday. Wind variable almost calm, with clear weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked, paddled and carried till 6, at 8 entered Maskechewan or Knee Lake where we paddled till 8 p.m. then put up.

July 6, Friday. Wind in the east quarter light breezes with clear weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 4 p.m. arrived at the head of Trout River where seven men were left with the boats. Nine more canoes arrived.

July 7, Saturday. Wind variable with rain in the evening. Several of the canoes arrived towards evening, unloaded one of the boats and hauled her up to be examined by the carpenter.

July 8, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with warm weather. The carpenter repaired the *Beaver* boat and put the *Buffalo* on the blocks. At 2 p.m. the four last canoes arrived.

July 9, Monday. Wind variable with rain at times. The men pitching and repairing canoes, and brought fifty pieces of building wood. The rainy weather prevents the boats being repaired. Fixed the men to the boats and canoes, [from] the want of men I am induced to return some of the canoes with two, and the rest with three, and those that proceeds inland but

¹ Tomison was returning inland from Gordon House. See p. 125 for his journal entry of the previous day.

poorly manned, and still obliged to leave three canoes here for want of men.

*July 10,*¹ Tuesday. Wind in the north quarter light breezes with a little rain at times. The carpenter finished overhauling the boats. Divided the provisions for those that return and also those that proceed, and laid out the cargoes for the same and find it very difficult to please all.

*July 11,*² Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 8 a.m. sent off fifteen canoes for York and embarked four more with the four boats for the upper settlements, at 8 p.m. put up on the second carrying place in Wippanapanish River. The boats are deeper loaded than last year owing to the bundles being more irregularly packed notwithstanding there is six pieces of goods less in the big boats than last year.

July 12, Thursday. Wind NE a small breeze with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we proceeded to the Hill Carrying Place and arrived at 3 p.m. and at half past 8 got all the goods over and two of the boats.

July 13, Friday. Wind SW and westerly, weather as yesterday. At 8 a.m. got the two boats over and proceeded to the White Fall where we arrived at noon and at half past 8 p.m. finished carrying the goods over.

July 14, Saturday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear weather. All hands employed hauling the boats over which was finished by 4 p.m.; one of them very leaky which was put on the blocks and repaired. Gave the men one quart of brandy per mess as they have had three very hard days work.

July 15, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we proceeded for Eachewemames, got the boats and goods over the carrying place, and proceeded down the river with some difficulty for want of water, having been no rain during the summer.

July 16, Monday. Wind in the east quarter light breezes with clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 7 p.m. put up in the Sea River.³ The boats did not come up.

July 17, Tuesday. Wind variable weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and at half past 5 p.m. put up in the Cross Lake.⁴ We waited for the boats on the Sea River carrying place to assist them over: at noon

¹ For a copy of Tomison's letter of this date to Joseph Colen, see pp. 176-8.

² Tomison wrote to Colen on this day: 'Magnus Meur (Muir) having positively refused to go Inland & it having been Proved by the people he came to this place [head of Trout River] with that he is fully capable of doing the duty required I desire that he may be sent to England by the next Ship'. B.239/b/60, fo. 26; also in B.239/b/66, fo. 51. He was accordingly sent home in the *King George* in 1798 as 'Useless'. C.1/404, fo. 3.

³ Fidler called this East Channel of Nelson River 'the White water river - Sea river or Oe win ne peg river'. E.3/1, fo. 78d.

⁴ Cross Lake, Nelson River. Unless this is a mistake of the copyist Tomison had turned northwards after entering East Channel and had gone some distance out of his direct route.

they arrived, having slept short of us about eight miles. At 7 p.m. put up in the Cross Lake.

*July 18,*¹ Wednesday. Wind ESE a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and at 7 arrived at Jack River House² where we remained for the night as it blew fresh.

July 19, Thursday. Wind SW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we proceeded, at 8 put ashore on an island as the boats and canoes shipped water. At 6 p.m. put off again, at 9 put up at the Great Lake.

July 20, Friday. Wind SE a fresh gale with clear weather. Could not proceed.

July 21, Saturday. Wind variable in the south quarter and blew fresh till noon. The carpenter overhauled the boats and found the bilge plank broke in two of them; one he repaired and at half past 11 we proceeded and at 5 put ashore, there being much swell in the lake; the boats went ahead.

July 22, Sunday. Wind in the south quarter light breezes with fine weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked, at 5 came up with the boats and

¹ Tomison wrote to Colen on this day: 'I do myself the pleasure for the last time this Season to enquire after your health, and hope this Scrawl will find you and your small family enjoyg. health and plenty as thank God we do here at present we arrived here the Seventh day in the morning from the head of Trout River which is great work considering the Shallowness of the Water in Eachewemames you will please to observe I could not keep the men to work at laying the foundation of the House for want of Provision, and those that returned wished to return as fast as possible, which I could not stop as I was only able to serve them out 6 Days provisions, for their Journey down & that was flour, Oatmeal, Barley, & Rice, as to myself I have eat nothing since I left the Rock House but Pemmecan and have not anything to trust to till I come near the wintering Ground - & I had not so much as an ounce of Sugar from the Rock nor any thing Else but what was Cartiled from the mens allowance, but all that I look upon as nothing had I a proper assortment of trading Goods, which I hope the defect you will Please to supply as far as you can for the Interest of our employers, I have sent inclosed a list of goods left at Jack River House which you may suppose is but little out of 22 Canoes, at the same time when divided between four Houses the quantity to Each will be but small Cotton Shirts are much wanted, & when the men Inland are served Sugar there will be left about 68 lbs. for the four Houses I could wish you would send up David Laughton as his Relation wants him as he is came from an injenies sate of People & may turn out a Canoe Builder, Hats sent up are but few, Lead there is plenty & no more is wanted, Powder is far Short, you will please not to forget sending for Beaver traps, & if any come out this year you will please to send some of them up; I conclude with Wishing you health & happiness and all under your Command & remain Dear Sir Your very Humble Servant Willm. Tomison. P.S. My best Respects to all the Gentlemen arround your Table, and may you all have Good news from England with a pleasing Shiptime - adieu W.T.'. B.239/b/60, fo. 33-33d. A marginal comment (in pencil) made in London refers the reader to 'Mr C's remarks' on Tomison's letter of 10 July. See p. 176, n. 2. A copy of Tomison's letter of 18 July 1798 was also entered in the correspondence book kept at York, B.239/b/66, fo. 57-57d.

² See p. 170, n. 3. Tomison left Charles Isham with only four bundles of trading goods and five small kegs of high spirits. These, as Colen said, were made useless because no powder or twine were provided with which to procure food. Isham was consequently obliged to go to Gordon House but he found the store there empty so he continued to York Factory, where he arrived on 4 August. He started his return journey on 15 August and reached Jack River House on 10 September to find 'all well but very Little Provisions and scarcity of twine [for fishing nets]'. B.239/a/101; B.154/a/3.

proceeded together without stopping till half past 11 p.m. then put up four miles short of the Great Fall.

July 23, Monday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we proceeded to the fall where the boats loaded with half cargo and the canoes with $\frac{2}{3}$ and went up: the former took 5 hours and the latter $2\frac{1}{2}$ for the first trip and made the second trip by 8, then put up. Gave each one pint of brandy.

July 24, Tuesday. Wind in the east quarter and blowed a fresh breeze towards noon. Made a trip in the morning by all hands, an[d] a second by one half and the other half carried. At half past 7 we left off as the men was much fatigued; gave them one pint per mess.

July 25, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. John Moore and Henry Spence¹ making oars and a false keel for bringing the boats over the carrying place. Finished carrying the goods and brought one of the boats over by 8 p.m.

July 26, Thursday. Wind SSE a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 4 a.m. mustered all hands to haul the boats across which was finished by 11 a.m. The boat builder and Henry Spence, joiner, employed making oars for the boats. At 3 p.m. sent the men up along shore to cut the wood away that intercepts tracking.

July 27, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh gale weather cloudy. At half past 3 a.m. we embarked, at 4 broke out a heavy rain which obliged us to put ashore at 7 put off again and proceeded to the Cross Lake² where we put up being a fresh of wind and much swell in the lake.

July 28, Saturday. Wind variable from north to west. At half past 3 p.m. [*sic*] we proceeded, at 4 p.m. got to the long point in the Cedar Lake where we was stopped by the wind blowing fresh, at 7 p.m. put off again and at half past 11 got across the lake.

July 29, Sunday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked, paddled and sailed till half past 6 p.m. then put up a little short of the Burnt Woods.

July 30, Monday. Wind variable fresh breezes clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 7 p.m. put up. At noon caught a moose deer crossing the river, also a few swans.

July 31, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear weather. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 7 p.m. put up six miles above Ubaskua.

August 1, Wednesday. Wind SW light breezes weather as before. At

¹ The Henry Spence (carpenter) referred to on p. 41, n. 2. He came from Stenness, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and joined the Company in 1795 when he was about 22 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 38; A.30/9, fo. 39.

² Saskatchewan River.

4 a.m. we embarked and at 6 p.m. put up below the fishing weir, the boatmen very much fatigued with the hot weather and hard rowing against the current.

August 2, Thursday. Wind variable with thunder and rain at noon. At 3 a.m. we embarked and at 6 p.m. put up in the little river below Cumberland House.

August 3, Friday. Wind in the west quarter a fresh breeze clear weather. At 3 a.m. we embarked and at half past 7 arrived at Cumberland House, found all well thank God, much thunder and rain in the night.¹

August 4, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The boat builder repairing the boats, Gilbert Laughton, John Park,² John Ross,³ Henry Spence, and some others making oars. Opened twenty packages of goods for a small assortment to be left here.

August 5, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes weather as yesterday.

August 6, Monday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear weather. John Moore repairing the boats, Gilbert Laughton and others making oars and sweeps for the boats, having been induced to cut down two of the latter for oars before we got here. Repacked some trading goods and made preparation for going off tomorrow, please God wind and weather permits.

August 7, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze first part clear latter part cloudy. At 2 p.m. embarked with the four boats and two canoes having left the other canoe here owing to one of the men being lame in his hand and a young hand that has done little or nothing on the passage up. At half past 7 p.m. put up.⁴

¹ On this day Peter Fidler noted in the Cumberland House journal the arrival of Messrs Tomison, Bird and [James] Sutherland [3rd, writer], with forty-two men in four boats and three canoes. During the earlier part of the summer Fidler noted the following movements of the Canadians: 11 June, Mr Daniel McKenzie and Mr McTavish left for Grand Portage; 12 June, three Canadian masters arrived from Athabasca; 13 June, the Canadians embarked; 20 June, Mr John McGillivray arrived from Muskrat River en route to Grand Portage; 15 Canadian canoes well loaded with good furs (mostly beaver) arrived from Athabasca; 11 July, six well-laden Canadian canoes arrived from Great Slave Lake, bringing their total number of packs of good beaver (90 lbs. each) traded north of Portage la Loche to 512. B.49/a/29.

² John Park, steersman, about 30 years of age. He came from 'Burra' (?Burray Island), Orkney Islands, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1792. A.30/9, fo. 37; A.32/5, fo. 99. When Colen complained on 20 July 1798 about Tomison upsetting his plans to establish a post in the Red Deer River area of present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan (p. 170, n. 3) he also remarked: '(John Ross & John Park) The men to have gone on this Expedition were those who have been stationed to the Northward with Mr [Malchom] Ross, but whether he has done it to thwart my designs I will not pretend to say, but he has taken those very Men with him up the Saskatchewan River, and also the very Canoes that were built this year & which were fixed on to Convey Goods between Gordon Store and Trout River'. B.239/a/101, fo. 41.

³ See previous note. He was John Ross 1st, steersman, from 'Burra' (?Burray Island), Orkney Islands, aged about 29 years. He had joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1790. Also on the York Inland establishment in season 1798-99 was John Ross 2nd, labourer, from 'Burra', aged about 20 years. A.30/9, fo. 37.

⁴ Fidler's Cumberland House entry includes the remarks, 'Messrs Tomison, Bird & [James]

August 8, Wednesday. Wind between west and north light breezes cloudy weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and at half past 6 p.m. put up two miles below Sturgeon River.

August 9, Thursday. Little wind variable first part cloudy latter part clear. At 4 a.m. we embarked, at 7 p.m. put up two miles above the High Bank.¹

August 10, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather cloudy with rain towards evening. At 4 a.m. we embarked and at 5 p.m. put up for the rain, tracked part of the day.²

August 11, Saturday. Wind as yesterday first part cloudy with rain latter part clear. At half past 7 we embarked and at 4 p.m. put up to dry the covering.

August 12, Sunday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. At half past 4 a.m. we embarked and tracked till half past 7 p.m. then put up. Saw one tent of Bungee Indians a little above us.

August 13, Monday. Wind variable weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till 7 p.m. then put up. Early in the morning passed by the Bungee Indians and gave them three gallons of brandy to drink.

August 14, Tuesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with rain at times. At 7 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till 7 p.m. then put up. Rained in the night which continued till 6 this morning.

August 15, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday with clear blowing weather. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded and at 7 arrived at Carleton House,³

Sutherland [3rd] Embarked in 4 Boats & 2 Canoes for the upper Settlements Mr Tomison has now brot. up & left here George Munro, with a sore hand, Malm. Sinclair, weak, Malm. Winnock with a sore heel, & Jno. Allen. Jas. Hutchins who has been here all the Summer went away with the Canoes'. B.49/a/29.

¹ In 1792 when Fidler described the country after leaving Cumberland House, he mentioned reaching 'a pretty high bank on the North side [of the Saskatchewan] called Pes coo tin naw - a stony shore . . . it only extends about $\frac{1}{2}$ Mile along the river & is the termination of a small hill from within'. After tracking along the northern shore westwards for three-quarters of a mile he passed, on the south side 'the head of Seppanuck [Sipanok] or the Carrot River' which falls into the Saskatchewan just above The Pas. After travelling another $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles Fidler reached 'a pretty high bank on the North side', and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles further on came to 'Thoeburns fall' [Tobin Rapids]. E.3/1, fo. 88.

² The party was 'passing from the lowest of the three prairie levels, viz. that of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River, to the second level, that of the Province of Saskatchewan - roughly. The Pasquia Hills are the rampart of this higher level in the neighbourhood of the Saskatchewan river. They show their influence on it in the "height of the outer edge of its valley and in the precipitous banks of the river". From this point on up to beyond the Forks, the [Canadian] voyageurs encountered a swift stream at times breaking into rapids. They did not attempt to paddle against it, but resorted to the tow line.' Note 4, p. 18 of A. S. Morton, editor, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5* (Toronto, 1929).

³ Before learning that he had received permission from the Governor and Committee to return to England in 1798 and to take his young son with him, James Bird, when at Gordon House (p. 124, n. 2), was 'prevailed on to return Inland' and to resume the charge of Carlton House. A.6/16, p. 81; B.239/b/79, fo. 22d.

all well thank God. The remaining part of the day opening packages to make out an assortment of goods for this place which is far from being a good assortment.

August 16, Thursday. Wind in the west and north quarter light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. John Park making a sweep for the boat he steers. Finished a very indifferent assortment of goods for this place and repacked the rest for the upper settlements. The irregular manner in which the goods are packed delays much time in making out the outfits for the different houses.

August 17, Friday. Wind variable weather as yesterday. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till half past 6 p.m. then put up in the North Branch.

August 18, Saturday. Wind variable between west and north light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till a half past 6 p.m. then put up.

August 19, Sunday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather cloudy with a continual rain from 2 in the morning till 6 p.m.

August 20, Monday. Wind northerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. At $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4 a.m. we embarked and rowed till 7 p.m. then put up; at noon passed the Setting River.¹

August 21, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. we embarked and rowed till 6 p.m. then put up to wait for one of the boats that has fallen behind for the last two days and have waited four hours each day, notwithstanding I have changed men twice since we left Cumberland House.

August 22, Wednesday. Wind variable from west to ESE light breezes first part clear latter part cloudy. At 5 a.m. we proceeded and paddled till 7 p.m. then put up at the Crossing Place. Killed one bull buffalo.

August 23, Thursday. Wind NE a fresh gale with a continual rain from 9 last night till 10 this.

August 24, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. At 6 a.m. we proceeded, rowed and tracked at times till 7 p.m. then put up. Killed one cow buffalo.

August 25, Saturday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear weather. At 5 a.m. we proceeded as before till 7 p.m. then put up. Killed four cow buffalo.

¹ Fidler referred to this river as 'the Sturgeon or Setting river'. E. 3/1, fo. 91. The Sturgeon River falls into the Saskatchewan River in Section 3, Township 49, Range 27, West of the Second Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 80. For reference to the post at Setting River occupied by James Bird during the winter of 1798-99, see pp. 182, 186.

August 26, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. we proceeded, tracked and rowed till 6 p.m. then put up at the Eagle Hill.

August 27, Monday. Wind WNW a strong breeze with clear weather. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded and at 6 p.m. put up where the canoemen that was ahead had killed three cow buffalo; took only part of it as it was very poor.

August 28, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday but blowed much harder towards noon. At $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4 a.m. we embarked, tracked and rowed till 1 p.m., then obliged to put ashore for the wind. Opened some wet bundles and dried them. John Moore and Gilbert Laughton made two oars that they blocked out below Hudsons House.

August 29, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as before. At 4 a.m. we proceeded, rowed and tracked till half past 6 p.m. then put up above the Fighting River. Killed one cow buffalo.

August 30, Thursday. Wind NNW first part foggy latter part clear and blowed fresh. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded as before till 7 p.m. then put up. At noon met two Frenchmen going down the river in a canoe with provisions for their canoes, by them I received a letter from Mr Hallet¹ which informs that they are poorly for provisions at both houses, and the horse stealers has stole all their horses and have left them none to fetch meat upon.

August 31, Friday. Wind between west and north fresh breezes with clear weather. At half past 4 a.m. we embarked, rowed and tracked till 6 p.m. then put up above Manchester House.

September 1, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze first part foggy latter part clear weather. At half past 4 a.m. we embarked, rowed and tracked till noon, then laid by most part of the day hunting buffalo but had no success.

September 2, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes weather as before. At 5 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till 7 then saw some buffalo. The want of provisions induced me to send William Flett² and Magnus Spence a hunting which killed two and at noon we put off again. At 7 p.m. put up above the Red Deers Hills.

September 3, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4 a.m. we proceeded and at 7 p.m. put up below the Paint River.³

¹ At Buckingham House. See p. 121. Hallett did not enter a copy in his journal, B.24/a/6.

² William Flett, steersman at £30 per annum, about 32 years of age, from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands. He joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1782. A.30/9, fo. 31. See J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 112, n. 4.

³ Vermilion River, Alberta, where Fort Vermilion (N.W.C.) and Paint River (H.B.C.) posts were later built.

September 4, Tuesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze clear weather. At half past 4 a.m. we embarked and at half past 4 p.m. we arrived at Buckingham House where we found all well¹ but no provisions, neither at this house or the house above.

September 5, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Opening goods for this place.

September 6, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes very warm weather. Opened some packages and repacked some for the upper house.

September 7, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 8 a.m. embarked the four boats and one canoe for the upper settlements, tracked till half past 6 p.m. then put up.

September 8, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till a half past 6 p.m. then put up.

September 9, Sunday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At half past 4 a.m. we proceeded and tracked till a half past 6 p.m. then put up.

September 10, Monday. Wind northerly a thick fog in the morning afterwards clear and blowed fresh. At 5 a.m. we proceeded, tracked till 7 p.m. then put up.

September 11, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. we proceeded and at half past 5 p.m. arrived safe at Edmonton House, found all well thank God but no provisions.

September 12, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes clear hot weather. The people employed drying tents, sails and boats rigging.

September 13, Thursday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. The men employed about various jobs.

September 14, Friday. Wind SW weather as before. Stowed away the trading goods now brought, and inspected the remains, found all right. In the evening received two red deer from the hunters.

September 15, Saturday. Wind variable in the east quarter with showers of rain towards evening. At 7 a.m. sent off nine men with horses to winter at Buckingham House, also sent four men down with a canoe to bring up pitch and other articles from Buckingham House. Nicol Spence hewing stuff for a boat's keel, and the rest variously employed. In the evening three Indians arrived, brought two beaver skins and a trifle of dried provisions.

September 16, Sunday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear weather.

¹ According to Henry Hallett's journal, B.24/a/6, it had been a quiet summer at Buckingham House. Six Canadian freemen paid their debts at Buckingham House on 10 July, and on 16 July and 21 August the Canadian post (Fort George) was visited by 'Iowow Indians', who were 'very Troublesome for Liquor'.

At 2 p.m. a small band of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

September 17, Monday. Wind westerly squally with heavy showers of rain. The carpenter and six men brought home fifty crooked timbers for boat building, also two keels for ditto, and the rest variously employed. The Muddy River Indians traded what they brought and went away, gave the freemen some credits and three of them pitched away in beaver hunting.

September 18, Tuesday. Wind SW a gentle breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 10 a.m. sent off Gilbert Laughton and eight men to bring down wood for canoe building; not having provisions to serve them was obliged to engage an Indian to hunt for them. Those at the house employed at various jobs. Received two moose deer and one buffalo from the hunters.

September 19, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent thirteen men up the river in a boat to bring down timber for plank, oars for boats, and birch for sundry uses. Received two red deer from hunters.

September 20, Thursday. Wind NW squally weather with showers of hail. Nicol Spence and one man sawing keels for boats and sent the other two men to fetch meat.

September 21, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Nicol Spence making frame timbers for the boats that are to be built, and the rest finished a cellar for preserving garden stuff in. At 2 p.m. the two men returned that went for meat, brought one red deer.

September 22, Saturday. Wind as yesterday a moderate breeze with clear weather. The men employed about various duty. Several Indians arrived from the westward, brought little or nothing.

September 23, Sunday. Little wind, variable cloudy weather. At 10 a.m. Malcolm Groat¹ and three men returned from Buckingham House, brought 300 lbs. provisions and a quantity of pitch. In the afternoon several tents of Indians arrived, brought little or nothing. Also the opposition parties² arrived with nineteen large canoes.

September 24, Monday. Wind easterly a small breeze weather as

¹ Malcolm Groat (Grott), steersman at £20 per annum, aged about 23 years, from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands. He joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1785. A.30/9, fo. 33. See also Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 327n.

² Peter Fidler remarked in the Cumberland House journal on 21 August 1798, '... arrived from the Great Carrying Place in 4 Canoes Messrs Grant, McKenzie, Hughs, Stewart, Chestellain, & a Mr John Richards, who left your honours service last fall from the Red River, also 3 Canoes arrived belonging to another Company [New North West Company] who are going to oppose Mr Tomison at Edmonton House, so that there will be a great competition for Trade at that place, this winter'. On the next day seventeen canoes 'passed by, for Buckingham & Edmonton Houses belonging to the N.W.Co.'. B.49/a/29. See *infra*, p. 182, n. 2, also p. 187, containing Tomison's later remark, 'Our new Neighbours have done no good but may do much harm'.

yesterday. Sent four men in a canoe with provisions to those collecting timber up the river, the carpenter and smith employed at their respective duties. Gave a supply to several Indians and put them across the river.

September 25, Tuesday. Little wind variable weather as on the proceeding [*sic* here and elsewhere in this journal] days. The smith and carpenter as before and the rest variously employed. Several Indians got supplies and went away, and late in the evening three Assinipoiet Indians arrived, brought about twenty beaver skins.

September 26, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men variously employed. A few Indians took credits and some of them went away.

September 27, Thursday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze with clear weather. The men variously employed. Received two red deer from the hunter. At 10 a.m. a band of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought a few beaver and small foxes which they traded and went away.

September 28, Friday. Wind variable almost calm with very hot weather. Sent two men for meat and the rest bringing home hay. Trusted several Indians a little debt and they went away.

September 29, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather cloudy with rain most part of the day. The men employed within doors.

September 30, Sunday. Wind NW a strong gale weather part cloudy part clear. At 3 p.m. thirteen men came down the river with timber, brought 130 logs, a quantity of birch for sundry uses, and stuff for oars.

October 1, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed rolling the timber out of the water and and laid it on the beach. At 6 p.m. Gilbert Laughton and his party returned, brought a quantity of canoe timbers and splinters, also a boat load of coal¹ for the smith's use.

October 2, Tuesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with rain in the evening. The men employed carrying coals up the bank, canoe wood etc. Received the flesh of one buffalo from the Indians.

October 3, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cold frosty weather. The carpenters laying blocks for boat building, the rest employed bringing home hay and took up the garden stuff.² At noon two Assinipoiet Indians arrived for tobacco which they got and went away.

October 4, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The smith and one man making nails for the carpenters and the rest variously employed.

¹ Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. 145, '... The branches of the Saskatchewan River in the freshets lodge Coal on the sands of the Rivers. On the main River when the water lowers, several bushels of very good Coal can be collected on the Sands...'.
² See pp. 144, 183.

At 10 a.m. the Indians arrived, brought twelve beaver skins and 500 lbs. dried provisions which they traded and went away in the evening.

October 5, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Sent two men to fetch meat, which returned in the evening, brought one red deer. The smith, carpenters and tailors at their respective duties, and the rest employed sawing stuff for sleds and bringing home the remainder of the hay. One tent of Southward Indians arrived, brought no more than five beaver skins.

October 6, Saturday. Wind in the east quarter a small breeze clear fine weather. The men employed about various jobs, received a moose deer from Indians.

October 7, Sunday. Little wind variable, weather cloudy with rain in the evening. At 8 p.m. two Assinipoiet Indians arrived.

October 8, Monday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with snow all day. The men could do nothing without doors. The Assinipoiet Indians traded the trifle they brought, and paid one of them for thirteen rolls of birchrind brought in the summer, and they went away at noon. George Flett¹ arrived from Buckingham House to fetch down horses.

October 9, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. No working without doors.

October 10, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as before.

October 11, Thursday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with snow at intervals. Received two deer from the hunting tent. In the evening hauled up the boats.

October 12, Friday. Wind as yesterday with cold sharp weather. Sent three men down to Buckingham House with the men's horses and to look after the fall canoes that are expected up. Sent two men to fetch meat. The carpenters, smiths, and tailors at their respective duties, and the rest employed at various jobs.

October 13, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with thawing weather. Men employed as on the preceding day. At noon a Muddy River Indian arrived, brought twenty beaver skins which he traded and went away.

October 14, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 11 a.m. three Southerd Indians arrived, brought a few beaver skins which they traded and went away. At 3 p.m. a band of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought a small quantity of provisions which they traded and went away also.

October 15, Monday. Wind variable with cloudy weather. The smith

¹ George Flett from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer in 1796 when he was about 20 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 31.

making large nails for the boats, tailors making clothing for the men, the rest employed sawing stuff for sleds and digging a cellar for preserving meat in warm weather.

October 16, Tuesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze part cloudy part clear. The tradesmen as before and the rest employed collecting firewood.

October 17, Wednesday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze, weather as yesterday. Four men sawing bilge plank for the boats and the rest collecting firewood.

October 18, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. Gilbert Laughton cleaning and repairing guns, the rest employed as before. In the evening a small band of Sussew Indians arrived, brought a trifle of provisions.

October 19, Friday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with clear weather. The men employed as before. The Sussew Indians traded what provisions they brought and went away: those only brought one beaver skin and bad wolves three.

October 20, Saturday. Wind NW a strong gale with cloudy weather. The men employed as on the preceding days. In the evening an Indian arrived, brought nothing.

October 21, Sunday. Wind as yesterday a moderate breeze with cloudy weather.

October 22, Monday. Wind west a fresh breeze with clear weather. Gilbert Laughton cleaning and repairing trading guns, the carpenters, smith and tailors employed at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, and the rest collecting firewood. At noon a small party of Swampy Ground Stone Indians arrived, brought about ninety beaver which they traded and went away.

October 23, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze first part clear latter part cloudy with snow in the evening. The men employed as on the preceding day.

October 24, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cold weather. The men employed as before. In the evening received two deer from the hunting tent.

October 25, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before.

October 26, Friday. Wind as before but much colder and much ice driving in the river. The men variously employed.

October 27, Saturday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy weather with snow in the evening. The men employed about various jobs.

October 28, Sunday. Wind NE a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At noon a small band of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought a

trifle of furs and provisions; also received one moose and two red deer from the hunter.

October 29, Monday. Wind as yesterday weather cloudy with snow all day. No working without doors. The Muddy River Indians traded what they brought and went away.

October 30, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At noon a part of four tribes of Indians arrived on the south side the river. The men employed crossing them to and again.

October 31, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with snow at intervals. Four men at the pit-saw, and the rest crossing Indians to and again. Finished trading with the four different tribes, some of which brought little or nothing.

November 1, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men variously employed.

November 2, Friday. Wind and weather much the same. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, the rest making sleds and cut firewood.

November 3, Saturday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, and the rest cut firewood and cleaned the yard.

November 4, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cloudy weather.

November 5, Monday. Wind variable light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. The smith making nails and rivets for the boats, Gilbert Laughton cleaning and repairing trading guns, the tailor making children's clothing for trade, four men sawing boards for upper works for the boats, the carpenters building ditto, and the rest cut firewood and making sleds. In the evening an Indian arrived, brought nothing save three martens.

November 6, Tuesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. The men employed as yesterday, the river set fast in the night.

November 7, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cold freezing weather. The men employed as before. Two red deer from the hunting tent.

November 8, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as on the preceding days. Gilbert Laughton finished cleaning and repairing guns, he was obliged to make a mandrel for straightening the barrels of some few that had got bent by accident.

November 9, Friday. Wind SE a fresh breeze cloudy weather with a little snow. The men variously employed.

November 10, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard.

November 11, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

November 12, Monday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, the rest cut firewood and sawed stuff for sleds.

November 13, Tuesday. Wind NE a small breeze weather cloudy and clear alternately. The men employed as yesterday. At 8 p.m. three Assinnepoiet Indians arrived, brought a few beaver.

November 14, Wednesday. Wind southerly weather as yesterday. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, two men making snowshoe frames, and the rest collecting firewood. Traded with the Indians and they went away in the evening.

November 15, Thursday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze weather as before. The men employed as on the preceding day.

November 16, Friday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with snow. The men cut firewood. At 10 a.m. Mr Pruden and one man with the two sent from this arrived; Mr Pruden informs me that they were froze in about one mile above the South Branch from which place he has travelled by land.¹

November 17, Saturday. Wind variable cloudy weather with drizzling snow. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. Received two moose deer from the hunter.

November 18, Sunday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze cloudy weather.

November 19, Monday. Wind SW a gentle breeze with clear weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, four men at the pit-saw, four men making up white tobacco in carrots from three to four lbs. weight, and the rest variously employed. In the evening an Indian arrived, brought a few furs.

November 20, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tradesmen as before, and the rest collecting firewood. The Indian traded and went away, and in the evening two more came, brought a few beaver and martens.

November 21, Wednesday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with fine warm weather. The men employed as yesterday. The Indians traded and went away.

November 22, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men making up tobacco for Indian trade, three men fetching meat from the Indians that went away yesterday, brought three red deer, the rest bringing home firewood. At noon three Fall Indians came for tobacco which they got and went off.

November 23, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with cloudy weather. The men employed as yesterday. At noon the Fall Indians

¹ For copies of the letters received by Tomison, see pp. 178-83.

arrived, brought nothing save a few very indifferent wolves many of which was not traded.

November 24, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. At 3 p.m. the Fall Indians went away and three Blackfeets arrived, brought sixty buffalo tongues which they traded for brandy and went away also.

November 25, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

November 26, Monday. Wind SW a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, sent two men for meat, the rest hauling firewood.

November 27, Tuesday. Wind as yesterday with clear fine weather. The men employed as yesterday. At noon a small band of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought a little provisions. In the evening those came home that went for meat, brought two red deer.

November 28, Wednesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with warm weather. Sent three men down to Buckingham House with trading goods, part of which is to be forwarded to Carleton and Cumberland Houses,¹ Gilbert Laughton stocking a gun that was broke by accident on the passage up, the rest employed as before. The Fall Indians traded and went away.

November 29, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with cloudy weather and a little rain. Sent two men to fetch meat from the hunting tent, the rest employed as on the preceding day.

November 30, Friday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze cloudy warm weather. The men employed as before, those returned that went for meat brought three red deer.

December 1, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The men variously employed. At 8 a.m. two Muddy River Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

December 2, Sunday. Wind as yesterday and blowed hard. At noon a small party of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

December 3, Monday. Wind easterly a small breeze, cloudy weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties and the rest hauling firewood. At noon six tents of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought a few wolves and a little provisions; those that came yesterday went away.

December 4, Tuesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather and snowed a little in the night. The carpenters finished building one of the boats to the ceiling and caulking, the rest employed as before. Traded with the Indians and some of them went away.

December 5, Wednesday. Wind northerly a small breeze weather part

¹ For the letters sent to the lower posts, see pp. 183-5.

cloudy part clear. One man making small sleds, and the carpenters making all ready for building another boat, the rest hauling firewood. At noon the Indians went away.

December 6, Thursday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cloudy sharp weather. Sent Mr Pruden and three men to look for buffalo, the rest employed as before.

December 7, Friday. Wind westerly weather as yesterday. The men employed as on the preceding days.

December 8, Saturday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with drizzling snow. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. In the evening two tents of Blackfeet Indians arrived.

December 9, Sunday. Wind WSW a small breeze weather cloudy and clear alternately. The Indians traded what they brought and went away.

December 10, Monday. Wind variable almost calm. The smith making boat nails, Gilbert Laughton stocking a gun, four men at the pit-saw, the joiner making chairs, the boat builders constantly employed at that duty, the rest cut and hauled firewood. In the evening Mr Pruden and his party returned from hunting, brought the flesh of two buffalo; no buffalo to be seen within seventy miles of this place.

December 11, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze cloudy weather. The men employed as on the preceding day. At noon two men came home from the hunting tent, brought two red deer.

December 12, Wednesday. Wind in the east quarter light breezes with clear weather. The men employed as before.

December 13, Thursday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with mild weather. The people employed as formerly. In the evening one tent of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought fourteen wolves and a trifle of provisions, also two Assinipoiet Indians arrived with a few furs to trade.

December 14, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

December 15, Saturday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. Late in the evening an Indian arrived, brought one beaver skin.

December 16, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze, weather part cloudy part clear. The Indian that arrived last night went away.

December 17, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday the blacksmith repairing his bellows and forge, the other tradesmen employed at their respective duties, and the rest fell firewood.

December 18, Tuesday. Wind WSW a small breeze with clear weather. The men employed as yesterday. Traded with some Blackfeet Indians that arrived last evening and they went away; brought many bad wolves

not worth taking. In the evening one man came home from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

December 19, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes with very mild weather. Sent six men to fetch meat, the smith making nails for the boats, and the rest employed sawing boards and collecting firewood. At noon a small band of Fall Indians arrived.

December 20, Thursday. Wind WNW a strong breeze with cloudy weather. The men employed as before. In the evening those returned that went for meat, brought the flesh of six bull buffalo. Traded a few wolves and foxes from the Indians that arrived yesterday.

December 21, Friday. Wind SW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. The men employed as on the preceding day. Several Blackfeet Indians arrived, traded with the Fall Indians and they went away.

December 22, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. The Indians traded and went away; at noon several more arrived.

December 23, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. Traded with the Indians and some of them went away.

December 24, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cold freezing weather. The people cut firewood.

December 25, Tuesday. Wind and weather much the same.

December 26, Wednesday. Wind NE a small breeze with very sharp weather. Being Christmas time did not put the men to duty.

December 27, Thursday. Wind ENE a small breeze first part cloudy with snow latter part clear weather. The men cut firewood. In the evening three of the free Canadians arrived, brought 168 made beaver the most part of which is martens and beaver. Also one Southerd Indian came and brought no more than eleven beaver skins and two martens which is all he has procured this winter.

December 28, Friday. Wind and weather much the same.

December 29, Saturday. Little wind variable with clear sharp weather. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. The Indian that arrived on Thursday went away.

December 30, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with very sharp weather.

December 31, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men cut firewood.

January 1, 1799, Tuesday. Wind variable almost calm with sharp weather.

January 2, Wednesday. Wind SW a small breeze with very sharp weather. The men cut firewood. In the evening one man came home from

the hunting tent for men to fetch two buffalo which is all that has been killed for the last fifteen days.

January 3, Thursday. Wind westerly a small breeze with a continuance of sharp weather. Sent two men to the hunting tent for meat, also sent James Gaddy¹ and one man to visit some Indians and bring what furs they have procured, the rest cut firewood.

January 4, Friday. Wind variable fresh breezes with very sharp weather. Sent five men in search of buffalo, and the rest cut firewood. At noon one tent of Fall Indians arrived, brought a few wolves and some buffalo meat. In the evening those that went for flesh returned, also James Gaddy came home, brought sixty made beaver.

January 5, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh breeze clear mild weather. The smith repairing the freemen's beaver traps, Gilbert Laughton repairing their guns, the carpenters working at the boat, the severe sharp weather has prevented them from doing any work for the last fifteen days, the rest cut firewood. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

January 6, Sunday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with snow.

January 7, Monday. Wind northerly a small breeze weather cloudy with snow at times. Sent four men to fetch meat from the hunter's tent, the tradesmen employed at their respective duties, and the rest hauling home firewood.

January 8, Tuesday. Wind westerly a moderate breeze with clear sharp weather. The men employed as on the preceding day. At noon the free Canadians pitched away to make their spring hunt. Late in the evening those that went for meat returned, brought the flesh of three poor buffalo.

January 9, Wednesday. Wind NE a gentle breeze weather as before. The boat builders working at the boat, the smith making nails for ditto, Gilbert Laughton cleaning and repairing pistols, and the rest cut firewood. Late in the evening two Indians arrived brought a few beaver and martens.

January 10, Thursday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. Sent four men to fetch meat from the hunter and the rest employed as yesterday. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

January 11, Friday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with cloudy warm weather. The men employed as before. In the evening Mr Pruden and his party returned from hunting, brought the flesh of three bulls. Those that went to the hunting tent also returned with three more. Last night one of the free Canadians arrived almost starved for want of food.

January 12, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men hauled home firewood and cleaned the yard. At noon four Fall Indians

¹ James Gaddy, senior, presumably, as he was the 'Linguist'.

came for tobacco, also one tent of Sussew Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

January 13, Sunday. Wind SW a small breeze, with cloudy warm weather. The Sussew Indians traded what they brought and went away. At noon two tents of Fall Indians arrived, brought a number of bad wolves and a trifle of provisions.

January 14, Monday. Wind WSW weather as yesterday. Sent six men to fetch meat, also two away with the free Canadian to bring what furs they have got, the rest variously employed. Traded with the Indians and they went away, also one family of Southerd Indians arrived almost starved.

January 15, Tuesday. Wind westerly a fresh gale and thawed much. The men cut firewood; at noon they came home that went for meat brought six buffalo.

January 16, Wednesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze and froze pretty hard. Sent six men to fetch meat and the rest employed as yesterday.

January 17, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, and the rest hauling firewood.

January 18, Friday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with clear fine weather. The men employed as before; at noon those came home that went for meat on Wednesday, brought five poor buffalo. Several Fall and Blackfeet Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

January 19, Saturday. Wind NW a fresh gale weather part cloudy part clear. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. At noon twenty able men of Fall and Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought little or nothing but provisions.

January 20, Sunday. Wind northerly a moderate breeze till the evening, afterwards blowed hard. Traded what the Indians brought and they went away; also a few more came, traded with them and they went away.

January 21, Monday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with clear sharp weather. The men cut firewood. In the evening George Geutcher and John Doaran¹ returned, brought about fifty made beaver in furs.

January 22, Tuesday. Wind NE a small breeze with very cold weather. Sent two men to the hunting tent to stay there, also three men to fetch meat, and the rest cut firewood and looking for the horses.

January 23, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cold freezing weather. The men employed hauling firewood.

January 24, Thursday. Wind SW a small breeze with clear sharp weather. The men cut firewood. The cold weather has prevented the boat

¹ John Doaran (Deron) from 'Birsay' (Birsay), Orkney Islands, bowsman, who joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1795 when he was about 16 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 31.

builders from doing their duty in that branch for some time past. In the evening those came home that went for meat, brought two poor buffalo.

January 25, Friday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. The smith making nails for the boats and the rest employed as before.

January 26, Saturday. Wind variable light breezes with clear sharp weather. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. At noon three tents of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought a small quantity of dried provisions, a few bad wolves and some small foxes; one half of the wolves I did not trade being good for nothing. One Southerd Indian man arrived in the night also and brought no more than thirteen beaver which is all he has procured since the beginning of October.

January 27, Sunday. Wind easterly a small breeze with cloudy mild weather. Traded with the Indians and in the evening they all went away.

January 28, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent three men to the hunting tent for meat, the carpenters working at the boat, the smith making nails for ditto, and the rest cut firewood.

January 29, Tuesday. Wind variable weather cloudy with a little snow. The men employed within doors. At noon a small band of Fall Indians arrived, brought nothing but a little provisions. At 10 p.m. received letters from Buckingham¹ and Carleton House² which informs of all being well there.

January 30, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. The men cut firewood. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

January 31, Thursday. Wind easterly a small breeze with snow most part of the day. The men picking oakum and otherwise employed within doors. Late in the evening three Indians arrived, brought nothing.

February 1,³ Friday. Wind variable light breezes, clear fine weather. The smith making nails for the boats, the carpenters working at ditto, and the rest employed as yesterday.

February 2, Saturday. Wind NE a fresh breeze, with snow and drift most part of the day. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard. Gave the Indians a supply of ammunition and they went away.

February 3, Sunday. Wind as yesterday a gentle breeze with clear fine weather.

February 4, Monday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze, with cold sharp

¹ Neither the original nor a copy of Hallett's letter has been found.

² See p. 140, n. 3; p. 141, n. 1. Tomison was referring to Bird's letter (p. 186) written from Setting River on 6 January 1799. See p. 182, n. 1; p. 186, n. 4.

³ For a copy of Tomison's letter of this date to James Bird at Setting River, see p. 186, n. 4.

weather. Sent five men to fetch meat, the rest cut firewood and employed within doors. In the evening an Indian arrived, brought nothing.

February 5, Tuesday. Wind ENE a small breeze with clear sharp weather. The men employed as yesterday. At noon a large band of Blood Indians arrived, brought some bad wolves, a few foxes and a little provisions.

February 6, Wednesday. Wind in the east quarter a small breeze weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. Traded from the Indians 200 wolves 110 foxes and 300 lbs. of provisions, being all that came from above thirty able men.

February 7, Thursday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. The smith making plates and screws for fixing false keels to the boats on carrying places, the rest cut firewood. At noon the Indians went away.

February 8, Friday. Wind WSW a small breeze with clear mild weather. Four men making up leaf tobacco for trade, the rest variously employed.

February 9, Saturday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with cloudy mild weather. Gilbert Laughton and the smith making rings and bolts for the boats, the rest cut firewood and cleaned the yard. At noon two Sussew Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away, and arrived in two hours after.

February 10, Sunday. Wind WNW a gentle breeze with cloudy warm weather. Traded with the Indians and they went away; those only brought seventy wolves and ten foxes which was not fifteen skins per man.

February 11, Monday. Wind WSW weather as yesterday with a continual thaw. Sent eight men to fetch meat, the boat builders constantly employed at that duty, and the rest variously employed. At noon a band of Blood Indians arrived, also a few of the Muddy River Indians.

February 12, Tuesday. Wind NW with a continuance of warm weather. The smith making nails for the boats knees and gunwales, three men sawing stuff for sleds and the rest variously employed. In the evening two men arrived from Buckingham House. The Indians traded and went away and a poor trade they brought.

February 13, Wednesday. Wind as yesterday, weather cloudy and froze a little. The men employed as before. Two Muddy River Indians came for tobacco, also Mr Hallet and one man arrived in the night from Buckingham House.

February 14, Thursday. Wind easterly light breezes with warm weather. The men employed as on the preceding days. In the afternoon those came home that went for flesh on Monday, brought seven poor buffalo. The Indians got tobacco and they went away.

February 15, Friday. Wind and weather much warmer than it was yesterday. The carpenters putting thafts in the boats, and the rest employed at sundry jobs. A small band of Fall Indians arrived, brought little or nothing, also some Blood Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

February 16, Saturday. Wind NE a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The men cut firewood and cleaned the yard, five excepted that went for meat. At noon a large band of Blood and Muddy River Indians arrived.

February 17, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Traded with the Indians but none of them went away.

February 18, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with very cold weather. The smith making nails for the boats, the other tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest cut firewood and tied up the furs traded yesterday, in quantity 900 made beaver. Early this morning the Indians went away.

February 19, Tuesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with cold sharp weather. The smith making stem and heel plates for the boats, the rest cut firewood and otherwise employed within doors. In the afternoon six men came home from the hunting tent, brought five poor buffalo. Also two Indians arrived, brought about twenty martens.

February 20, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes clear fine weather. Sent four men to fetch meat, and the rest employed as yesterday. At noon a young Indian arrived, brought a few martens, and those that came yesterday went away.

February 21, Thursday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze with cloudy weather, and a little snow in the evening. The men employed as on the preceding days. The Indian went away.

February 22, Friday. Wind NW a strong breeze with cold sharp weather. The tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest cut firewood.

February 23, Saturday. Wind NE a small breeze with clear weather. The tradesmen as before and the rest cut firewood, and cleaned the yard. At noon two of the four men sent for meat on Wednesday returned with two buffalo.

February 24, Sunday. Wind SE weather as yesterday. In the evening two Indians arrived brought nothing.

February 25, Monday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather cloudy with a little snow. Sent two men to the hunting tent, the rest variously employed. At noon the other two men came home, brought two buffalo.

February 26, Tuesday. Wind easterly a small breeze with clear fine

weather. The men employed as on the preceding day. At noon a large band of Blackfeet and Blood Indians arrived, brought little or nothing but provisions.

February 27, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men employed as before. Traded with the Indians and they went away; those brought upwards of 1000 lbs. of provisions and no more than sixty ordinary wolves and thirty small foxes, which was not three skins a man.

February 28, Thursday. Wind as before with cloudy mild weather. The carpenters finished building the other boat, caulking and ceiling excepted, the smith making steer rings and ring bolts for ditto, the rest employed within doors. At noon two men came home, brought the flesh of two buffalo. Also an Indian arrived in the evening, brought four beaver and eight martens.

March 1, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather cloudy with a little snow. The boat builders making oars for the boats, sent four men to fetch meat, and the rest cut firewood and employed within doors. Early this morning the Indian went away that came last night.

March 2, Saturday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. The smith making rudder work for the boats now built and the rest cut firewood and cleaned the yard.

March 3, Sunday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with clear fine weather and thawed much towards the middle of the day. Four Fall Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away. In the evening a small band of them arrived, brought little or nothing save provisions.

March 4, Monday. Wind variable weather as on the preceding days. The carpenters hewing stuff for oars, the smith making awl blades, Gilbert Laughton very much out of order, the rest removing the horses, the wolves having fallen upon them, killed some and torn many others. Traded with the Indians and they went away and at noon five tents more came with provisions.

March 5, Tuesday. Wind easterly a gentle breeze weather as before. Two men sawing plank, the carpenters making oars, the tailors making clothing for the men, the smith making awl blades, and the rest variously employed. Traded with the Indians and they went away; those brought 1500 lbs. weight of provisions of sorts, and no more than ninety wolves which was not three skins per man.

March 6, Wednesday. Wind westerly a small breeze weather the same as before. The men employed as on the preceding day. In the evening four Blackfeet Indians came for tobacco.

March 7, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with warm weather.

Sent ten men to fetch flesh from the hunting tent, the rest employed as before. At noon a large band of Blackfeet Indians arrived, brought little or nothing.

March 8, Friday. Wind NE a small breeze with cloudy warm weather. The men attending the house as the Indians are very thievishly inclined, traded from them what they brought, and in the evening they went away; those are a bad set of Indians, having stolen twenty of our horses and killed two more.

March 9, Saturday. Wind northerly a small breeze weather cloudy with a little snow. The men variously employed. In the evening one tent of Fall Indians arrived, brought little or nothing, also four Muddy River Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

March 10, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes weather as yesterday. At noon a large band of Muddy River Indians arrived, brought nothing but wolves and small foxes.

March 11, Monday. Wind ENE a fresh breeze with a great fall of snow in the night, and part of the day. The men employed within doors. Finished trading with the Indians. At noon one Assinipoiet Indian arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco.

March 12, Tuesday. Wind NW a small breeze with clear fine weather. Sent four men to fetch flesh from the hunting tent, also sent Mr Pruden and two men away with the Assinipoiet Indian to bring what furs they may have, the smith making awl blades, and the rest variously employed. At noon the Indians went away, these have brought 700 wolves and 700 small foxes. In the evening one tent of Fall Indians arrived, brought hardly anything.

March 13, Wednesday. Wind variable light breezes clear fine weather. The boat builders making oars, two men hewing timber, and the rest variously employed. The Fall Indians traded a trifle of provisions and twenty small foxes and went away.

March 14, Thursday. Wind WNW a small breeze weather as before. Sent two men away with an Indian that arrived in the night to bring what furs they have at the tent, the rest employed as on the preceding day. At noon those that went for meat returned, brought three very poor buffalo.

March 15, Friday. Wind NW till noon afterwards varied to east. Cloudy warm weather. The men variously employed. In the evening a Sussew Indian came for tobacco which he got and went away.

March 16, Saturday. Little wind variable weather part cloudy part clear. Hauled the boats up the bank to be repaired, afterwards the men employed as yesterday. At noon the Sussew Indians arrived, those have brought nothing but shoe leather. At 6 p.m. John Ross and James

Morwick returned, brought 100 made beaver in beaver and martens from two Indians.

March 17, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh gale with cloudy weather. The Sussew Indians traded what they brought and went away, brought twelve wolves and nineteen dressed red deer skins. In the evening three Muddy River Indians came for tobacco. Mr Pruden returned, brought 100 made beaver in beaver.

March 18, Monday. Wind variable light breezes with clear weather. The smith making fire-steels, the carpenters making oars, two men hewing timber, and the rest employed within doors.

March 19, Tuesday. Wind easterly a small breeze with clear weather. The carpenters making masts and rudders for the new boats, the smith making fire-steels, Gilbert Laughton making stems for canoes, and the rest employed within doors. At noon the Muddy River Indians arrived, also those that went for meat brought the flesh of three buffalo.

March 20, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with cold weather. Gilbert Laughton and one man sawing stuff for gunwales to canoes, and the rest employed as yesterday. Traded with the Indians and they went away, these brought 560 wolves and 424 small foxes.

March 21, Thursday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear weather. The carpenters repairing the boats, the smith making rudder work for ditto, the rest employed about sundry jobs. At noon a small band of Fall Indians arrived, brought nothing but provisions, which they traded and went off again, and a few Sussew Indians arrived, also three Assinipoiet Indians.

March 22, Friday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze with clear fine weather. The men employed as yesterday. The Sussews and Stone Indians traded and went away, the former brought seven skins and the latter twenty-four made beaver; also several Indians arrived from the Beaver Hills, brought a few beaver and martens.

March 23, Saturday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties, the smith excepted which is ailing. Sent Mr Pruden and one man away with an Indian to fetch a few furs, and returned at noon, brought twenty beaver and thirty martens. The rest carrying firewood up the bank. Traded with the Indians and they went away.

March 24, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. In the afternoon six men came home from the hunting tent, as also did the hunter, being unable to hunt having been very ill for some time.

March 25, Monday. Wind NW a fresh gale weather part cloudy part clear. The carpenters repairing the boats, tailors making clothing for trade, four men ailing for several days past, and the rest carrying wood up the bank.

March 26, Tuesday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with clear weather. Gilbert Laughton and one man planing timbers for canoes, Nicol Spence caulking one of the new boats, John Moor repairing one of the old ones, four men still ailing, and the rest made 3800 lbs. pemmican. In the evening two Assinnepoiet Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

March 27, Wednesday. Little wind westerly with clear warm weather. The carpenters and tailors employed at their respective duties, Gilbert Laughton and John Ross making canoe work, John Park still employed making kegs, six men ailing, and the rest variously employed. At 10 a.m. a few Stone Indians arrived, traded the furs brought by Mr Pruden and went away in the afternoon.

March 28, Thursday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze with very warm weather. Sent James Gaddy and one man to fetch a few furs from one of the free Canadians, the tradesmen employed as yesterday, seven men ailing, and the rest made 3150 lbs. pemmican for the journey down.

March 29, Friday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear weather. The tradesmen employed as on the preceding days, about half of the men is now off duty by a disorder in the head and breast, the rest about various jobs within doors. At noon James Gaddy returned, not having found the man they went in search of. Several Indians arrived today, brought nothing.

March 30, Saturday. Wind ESE a fresh breeze clear warm weather. The men that are well employed as before. At noon some more Indians arrived, brought nothing.

March 31, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. In the morning one of the free Canadians arrived for a supply of ammunition and tobacco.

April 1, Monday. Wind SE a fresh breeze with cloudy cold weather. The carpenters making rudders and fitting them to the boats, Gilbert Laughton and John Ross planing canoe timbers, John Park making small kegs, the smith making nails, and the rest that are well employed about various jobs. The freeman went back to his tent, and in the evening Alexander Flet and John Linklater¹ arrived from Buckingham House.

April 2, Tuesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze cloudy weather with snow. The men employed within doors, made 700 lbs. pemmican. In the afternoon two Muddy River Indians came for tobacco which they got and went away.

April 3, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. The men employed crossing the Muddy River Indians which was attended with some trouble as the river is not broke up but in one little place.

¹ John Linklater, junior, canoeeman. He came from 'Harra' (Harray), Mainland, Orkney Islands, and had joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1792 when he was about 18 years of age. A.30/8, fo. 34; A.30/9, fo. 36.

April 4, Thursday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. The men chiefly employed crossing Indians and attending the house. Traded with most part of the Indians and put some of them across in the evening, also sent Mr Pruden and one man out to some Indians to bring their credits.

April 5, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with very warm weather. The men variously employed. Finished trading with the Indians and they all went away. Late in the evening Mr Pruden returned, brought about thirty made beaver; also the Muddy River Indians brought 1511 made beaver.

April 6, Saturday. Wind ESE a fresh breeze with clear warm weather. The carpenters at their respective duties, Gilbert Laughton and one man bending canoe timbers, and the rest employed within doors. At noon an Indian man and his wife arrived, brought seven beaver skins.

April 7, Sunday. Wind variable light breezes with rain at times.

April 8, Monday. Wind SW a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. Six men very ill, one of which is very weak, the carpenters repairing one of the boats built last year and caulking one of the new ones, the smith making nails for ditto, John Park making kegs, Gilbert Laughton and John Ross planing splinters for canoes and the rest variously employed. At noon fifteen tents of Indians arrived on the other side from a buffalo pound [MS: pond] where they have been most part of winter and have not got thirty skins among the whole and not much provisions.

April 9, Tuesday. Wind westerly light breeze clear fine weather. The men employed as yesterday. Traded some provisions, tents and shoe leather from the Indians that arrived on the other side yesterday. At noon an Indian arrived, brought a few beaver skins.

April 10, Wednesday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze clear weather. The tradesmen employed as on the preceding days, five men still sick, the rest carrying ice to put into the cellar. In the evening a young Indian arrived from the northward for a supply of tobacco and ammunition.

April 11, Thursday. Wind westerly weather as yesterday. At two in the morning sent three men with horses to those Indians where the young Indian came from yesterday, and the rest employed about various duty. Received thirty fine beaver from one of the free Canadians.¹

April 12, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze with cold cloudy weather. The carpenters caulking the boats built last year, the smith making nails for ceiling, and the rest employed picking oakum and doing

¹ This may be the Canadian who delivered letters from Tomison and Hallett to Bird at Setting River on 22 April 1799. Bird also received letters from Tomison on 9 May following. They were delivered by 'the new Canadian adventurers'. B.197/a/1. Neither originals nor copies have survived.

odd jobs within doors. In the afternoon Mr Pruden and his party returned, brought 130 made beaver in beaver and martens, which was all he could procure from seven men.

April 13, Saturday. Wind variable fresh breezes clear warm weather. The tradesmen employed at their respective duties and the rest employed within doors. Received eight beaver from two Indians today.

April 14, Sunday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. Traded two tents from Indians on the other side and some of them pitched away.

April 15, Monday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. Gilbert Laughton, John Park and John Ross bending timbers for canoes, the smith, carpenters and tailors employed at their respective duties, seven men still off duty. In the evening two Indians arrived, brought nothing; one of those between eight and nine gave me a cruel stab in the inside of the left knee which almost went through. The great loss of blood has made me very weak and God knows how it will end. I had given him a small quantity of liquor which I suppose he thought was not enough; he laid hold of my coat and would not let go until he tore it, for which I gave him a small tap on the side of the head and went out to be clear of him. He followed me not knowing he had a knife; he asked me if I wanted to die, I asked him if he wanted to kill me, at which time he stabbed me.¹

April 16, Tuesday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze clear weather. Two men making up the old canoes into sails for the boats, sent two men to fetch a few skins belonging to one of those that came last night which returned in the afternoon, brought about fifty made beaver, the rest variously employed, tradesmen excepted.

April 17, Wednesday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The men variously employed. In the afternoon the Indians arrived that Mr Pruden fetched the furs from.

April 18, Thursday. Little wind easterly clear fine weather. Gilbert Laughton and two men making gunwales for canoes, the carpenters repairing the old boats, the smith making nails for ditto, and the rest made 456 lbs. pemmican and did other small jobs about the house.

April 19, Friday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze weather cloudy with a little rain. The boat and canoe builders employed as on the preceding day, nine men off duty, and the rest packed ten bundles of furs; the press

¹ Hallett at Buckingham House on 24 April heard from Canadians that Tomison had received 'a Mortal wound in one of his Knees'. On the following day he sent a man to Edmonton to learn the truth. The re-assuring news that Tomison's wound was 'not so Mortal' was received on 1 May. B.24/a/6.

broke which prevented them from packing any more until a new one is erected.

April 20, Saturday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. The boat builders at their duty, Gilbert Laughton with some others erecting the press, and the rest packed a few bundles in the temporary press. Most of the Indians having nothing to trade, I therefore was induced to give them ammunition, tobacco and brandy with many other articles for nothing. This unnecessary expense is occasioned by the great opposition.¹ Received a few beaver and swans from Indians.

April 21, Sunday. Wind westerly a moderate breeze weather part cloudy part clear. In the evening received five small geese from an Indian.

April 22, Monday. Wind easterly a moderate breeze with cloudy weather. The boat builders repairing the old boats, Gilbert Laughton, John Park and John Ross laid the bottom of a canoe, five men still off duty, and the rest employed at the press, packed forty-eight bundles of furs.

April 23, Tuesday. Wind NE a fresh gale with rain all last night and part of this day. The men employed about odd jobs within doors. In the afternoon an Indian arrived, brought nothing. At 5 p.m. launched the two new boats, put stones into them and moored them off.

April 24, Wednesday. Wind southerly a moderate breeze weather cloudy and clear alternately. The carpenters repairing the boats, three men building a canoe, and the rest packed forty-eight bundles of furs. Received one beaver and two swans from Indians.

April 25, Thursday. Wind SSW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. Those that are well, employed as on the preceding days. Packed forty-eight bundles of furs. At noon John Linklater arrived from Buckingham House, brought the disagreeable news of James Sutherland the second from the Island of Burray² having departed this life on the 18th of April and several others very sickly.³

April 26, Friday. Wind NE a moderate breeze clear weather. The men employed as yesterday, packed forty-eight bundles of furs.

April 27, Saturday. Little wind westerly with clear weather. The men employed as yesterday, packed thirty-four bundles of furs. John Linklater set off for Buckingham House. Received three beaver, a few geese and ducks from an Indian.

¹ See p. 182, n. 2; p. 186, n. 4.

² He had joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1796 and was listed as a labourer receiving £6 per annum, plus £2 inland bounty, and as being about 21 years of age at the time of his death from 'a cough & cold attended with a violent Fever'. He was ill for sixteen days. A.30/9, fo. 39; B.24/a/6.

³ On 2 April 1799 Hallett recorded in the Buckingham House journal that ten men were 'ailing with a violent cold & cough'. B.24/a/6.

April 28, Sunday. Wind NE a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear.

April 29, Monday. Wind variable squally weather with rain and snow at times. The boat and canoe builders employed at that duty; James Walter,¹ John Ballanden,² George Geutcher, Robert Yorston,³ and Malcolm Groat still unable to do duty; six men gathering pitch for the inside of canoes; the rest loading the boats with stones to their loading marks to keep them tight as they draw but four inches water when light.

April 30, Tuesday. Wind northerly a fresh gale with very cold weather. The blacksmith making nails for the boats for the voyage down, the carpenters making oars, the canoe builders could do but little owing to the cold weather, the rest gathering pitch and otherwise employed within doors.

May 1, Wednesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather cloudy and clear alternately. The men employed as on the preceding days. In the evening John Moar boat builder was taken very ill. A strong frost last night.

May 2, Thursday. Wind southerly a gentle breeze with fine weather. Six men unfit for duty, Gilbert Laughton, John Ross and John Park with the assistance of two more timbering and pitching canoes in the inside, the smith making nails for the boats, and the rest variously employed.

May 3, Friday. Wind northerly a fresh breeze weather clear and cloudy alternately. The canoe builders, smith and carpenters employed in their usual way, the rest that are well digging in the garden. Received part of a bull buffalo and three beaver skins from Indians.

May 4, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Five men still unfit for duty, the rest employed as on the preceding day. Received four swans and two beaver from an Indian.

May 5, Sunday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze weather for the most part cloudy.

May 6, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Five men still unfit for duty, the smith making a pair of hinges for gates, Gilbert Laughton and his party working at canoes, the carpenters one of them very ill the other making steer oars for the boats, and the rest variously employed.

May 7, Tuesday. Wind variable fresh breezes with cloudy weather. Twelve men planting potatoes and the rest employed as yesterday.

May 8, Wednesday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather as before. Gilbert

¹ James Walter (Walters), a tailor from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1793 when about 21 years of age.

² ?John Ballanden 1, 2, or 3, who were all on the York Factory Inland establishment. A.30/9, fo. 28.

³ See p. 46, n. 1. Robert Yorston, who joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1795, came from St Ola, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and in 1799 was listed as a canoeman at £6 per annum plus £2 inland bounty, and was aged 21 years. A.30/9, fo. 41.

Laughton and his party building a small canoe for two Indian guides intended for the Beaver River¹ to conduct canoes to the Red Deers Lake,² the smith making nails for the boats, and the rest fitting boats sails, oars and rigging.

May 9, Thursday. Wind variable from SW to west cold weather with showers of rain. The canoe builders working at canoes, the rest preparing for embarking. In the evening received sixty made beaver from a Bungee Indian, forty of which was credit.

May 10, Friday. Wind NE a fresh breeze cloudy and clear alternately. Gilbert Laughton, John Park and John Ross finished building four large and one small canoe: the large 24 feet long, 4 feet wide and 2 feet deep, the small one 18 feet long, 2½ wide and 1½ deep, this canoe is for two Indian guides for an intended expedition in some other quarter.³ In the forenoon Alexander Flet with twelve men arrived from Buckingham House to assist in taking down the boats and canoes. Laid out the cargoes for three boats and one canoe.

May 11, Saturday. Wind as yesterday with mild weather. At 8 a.m. embarked three boats and one canoe manned with sixteen men, loaded with 102 bundles of furs and thirty-two bags of provisions; two boats and two canoes preparing to embark tomorrow, God willing.

May 12, Sunday. Wind easterly a small breeze with a heavy rain last night and most part of the day. At noon received one moose deer from the hunter.

May 13, Monday. Wind westerly a gentle breeze clear fine weather. At 7 embarked two boats and two canoes manned with thirteen men, loaded with ninety bundles of furs and twenty-six bags of provisions. The rest packed two bundles and making ready to embark in three days more.

May 14, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes clear weather. Inspected every article of trading good in the warehouse.

May 15, Wednesday. Wind almost calm clear hot weather. Inspected all kinds of stores.

¹ J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 358, n. 1, 'Beaver river is really the upper part of Churchill river, and it only bears that name above Ile à la Crosse lake. It rises in small streams near Lac la Biche, and flows at first eastward, and then northward to its mouth, having a length of 350 miles. Near the bend is Green lake . . .'.
² Lac la Biche, Alberta.

³ A reconnaissance carried out from Buckingham House in the preceding month was part of Tomison's attempt to meet the Company's wish (1798) for posts outfitted from York Factory to be built in the Athabasca country. See pp. lx, lxii. On Sunday, 21 April 1799, Hallett 'sent one man with an Indian to Discover some Ground to the Northward of this [Buckingham House] to see if their is any Possibility of Conveying Goods Across land to settle a post'. The men returned two days later 'with word that they had discover'd a large extence of Ground but one Forest of woods & marches'. B.24/a/6. See *infra*, p. 207.

May 16, Thursday. Wind northerly first part clear fine weather latter part cloudy and blowed fresh. At 9 a.m. embarked nine men in two canoes and one boat with the remainder of furs and provisions, having left the following persons at Edmonton House, viz. James Gaddy in charge, John Moar boatbuilder, Henry Spence, James Hay,¹ James Folster,² James Spence, John Forbest,³ Robert Garson, Thomas Bews⁴ and Robert Flett.⁵ There not being men to man the boats and canoes induced me to take two men away that were to be left; the scarcity of provisions at Edmonton House last summer and no better prospect this, has induced me to leave 2356 lbs. pemmican.

May 17, Friday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 5 a.m. proceeded and at 7 p.m. put up a few miles above Buckingham House.

May 18, Saturday. Wind as yesterday light breezes with showers of rain. At 5 a.m. arrived at Buckingham House, found all well thank God, two men excepted which is still weakly but in a fair way of recovery.⁶ In the evening inspected the trading goods and stores at this place.

May 19, Sunday. Wind NE a fresh breeze cloudy weather. Divided the furs and provisions at this place amongst the boats and canoes which made thirty-seven bundles of furs for each of the small boats with fifteen bags of provisions, and for each of the other four forty-three bundles of furs and seventeen bags of provisions, and no more than five men in large and four in the small boats and two in each canoe and many of them worn down with sickness and unable to work.

May 20, Monday. Wind variable with showers of rain. At half past 8 a.m. embarked six boats and six canoes, having left eight men at

¹ James Hay from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer in 1797, when he was about 16 years of age. His wages were £6 per annum plus £2 inland bounty. A.30/9, fo. 33. *Infra*, p. 296, n. 1.

² James Folster from 'Birsas' (Birsay), Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1792. In 1799 he was listed as a canoe man at £12 per annum and as being aged 28 years. A.30/9, fo. 33.

³ John Forbest is the signature on his contract dated 29 June 1790 (A.32/4, fo. 24) when he joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer for five years at £6 per annum, but his name appears both as Forbest and as Forbes in the records. He came from Firth, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and at the time of his engagement was about 20 years of age. After spending one season at York Factory he was transferred in 1791 to the York Inland establishment. A.30/5, fos. 23, 40, 68. In 1799 he was listed as a bowsman at £14 per annum, his age then being given as 32 years. A.30/9, fo. 32. For a note on Forbes's later career, see p. 244, n. 1.

⁴ Thomas Bews from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1796. In 1799 he was listed as a labourer at £6 per annum plus £2 inland bounty and as being 37 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 28.

⁵ Robert Flett from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, who joined the Company in 1797 when about 18 years of age, was listed in 1799 as a labourer at £6 per annum plus £2 inland bounty. *Ibid.*, fo. 32.

⁶ The ailing men at Buckingham House were William Sinclair (2nd, 3rd or 4th?) and Oman Budge. B.24/a/6, 17 May 1799.

Buckingham House, Mr Pruden in charge, Alexander Flet and six men more, two which could not embark being very weak.

May 21, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked six boats and six canoes and at 8 p.m. put up; sailed part of the day.

May 22, Wednesday. Wind variable between SW and west fresh gales with showers of rain. At half past 3 a.m. we proceeded and at 8 p.m. put up.

May 23, Thursday. Wind westerly fresh breezes with clear weather. At half past 3 a.m. proceeded as before till 8 p.m. then put up.

May 24, Friday. Wind NE a gentle breeze with clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded and at 7 p.m. put up.

May 25, Saturday. Wind NW weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. proceeded as before till noon then arrived at Carlton House,¹ found all well thank God.

May 26, Sunday. Wind easterly a small breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 9 a.m. proceeded down the river as before till 8 p.m. then put ashore; at 9 put off again and went all night.

May 27, Monday. Wind in the east quarter fresh breezes cloudy weather with showers of rain. Continued going before the current from 9 last night till 7 p.m. then put ashore, and at 9 put off again and went all night.

May 28, Tuesday. Wind WNW a fresh breeze with clear weather. At noon arrived at Cumberland House, found all well thank God.²

May 29, Wednesday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. The carpenter making knees for one of the boats that was broken on the passage down, the boat and canoe men repairing their sails and other rigging thereto belonging.

May 30, Thursday. Wind easterly a strong breeze cloudy weather with a little rain at times. The boat and canoe men employed as before. In the afternoon two Canadian masters in a light canoe with six men arrived from the northward on their journey down to the Great Carrying Place.

May 31, Friday. Wind SE a fresh gale with heavy rain, through the day.

June 1, Saturday. Wind between SW and west fresh breezes, weather

¹ Bird had left his Setting River post for Carlton House on 21 May and had arrived there on the following day. He embarked with Tomison for Cumberland House on 26 May. Bird must have reported to Tomison that at Setting River on 17 May 'a party of Canadians caught three Stone Indians who they suppose were come to steal Horses & brought them prisoners to their House'. During the night of 20-21 May one Indian escaped. This 'so enraged the Canadians that they immediately butchered the remaining two & tossed their Bodies in the River'. Bird added, 'What may be the consequences of so rash an action time only can determine, but I am much afraid it will occasion the loss of lives of some poor Men, if ever they should be met by the Indians, from the Houses'. B.197/a/1.

² Fidler's concluding entry in his Cumberland House journal for 1798-99 records the arrival there of Tomison, Bird, Hallett and [the 3rd James] Sutherland. B.49/a/29.

part cloudy part clear. Settled the men for the boats and canoes, the latter to embark tomorrow God willing.

June 2, Sunday. Wind NW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. Some of the canoes not being ready prevented them embarking. At noon Mr William Linklater¹ from one of the Churchill inland houses² arrived here by order of Mr Stainer to know the conveyance by water between that and this, also to get two old hands from this place³ which I am sorry to say we cannot supply him with, having several canoes left here for want of men to conduct them down.

June 3, Monday. Wind northerly a strong gale with a continual rain.

June 4, Tuesday. Wind NW a fresh breeze cloudy weather. At half past 6 a.m. embarked ten canoes, manned with twenty men and loaded with 130 bundles of furs, 228 lbs. of provisions.

June 5, Wednesday. Wind NW a fresh gale with clear weather. The men preparing to embark with the boats tomorrow, having waited several days for William Dunnet,⁴ that is out with Indians. At 7 p.m. two Indians with their families arrived, brought 100 made beaver.

June 6, Thursday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze clear weather. The furs that came yesterday being wet prevented our embarking.

June 7, Friday. Wind variable light breezes clear weather. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 a.m. embarked six boats, loaded with 250 bundles of furs and 4000 lbs. provisions manned with thirty-five men, having left Mr Fiddler with three

¹ William Linklater from Stromness, Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1783 and in outfit 1798–99 was listed as an inland master at £40 per annum. He was then about 30 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 46. He was the Mr Linklater described by William Auld on 23 July 1799 as of an 'affable temper and active disposition' and as being held in regard by the Indians. B.42/b/41, fo. 16d. See *infra*, p. 213.

² William Linklater built a post 'on an Island at the head of Loon River', south of Reindeer Lake, in August 1798 and Canadians arrived 'to Build on this Spot in opposition' on 28 September. At the end of the season Linklater took out 982 $\frac{1}{2}$ made beaver, and his unnamed opponent two packs. In the middle of January 1799, when his Indian customers were leaving Loon Lake on a three-months' hunt, Linklater set off for the purpose of opposing Mr [John] McGillivray at Pelican Lake and 'retrieving the Churchill Credits'. On arrival at Pelican Lake he found that 'Mr Charles old House' had been nearly destroyed by Canadians. William Linklater returned to Loon River post leaving his brother Thomas and three men at Pelican Lake. B.118/a/1, fos. 1, 2, 5, 6; B.42/b/41, fos. 5, 6d., 8, 9, 13, 18; B.42/a/124, 22 June 1798.

³ Linklater who had left Loon River on 24 May in the company of three Indians (B.179/a/1, 31 May 1799), would have been able to discuss the route with Peter Fidler who had travelled over it in the opposite direction in the late summer of 1790 when he was assistant to Philip Turnor on the expedition from Cumberland House 'towards the Athapiscow Country'. See Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 327–38. The orders from Thomas Stayner, Chief at Churchill Factory, to Linklater have not been found, and because of missing records it has not been possible to trace any reference to his return to Churchill River, but he was at Indian Lake House on 17 July 1799 ready to start for Ile-à-la-Crosse. B.84/a/1. See also *infra*, p. 213, n. 4.

⁴ William Dunnet came from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, and was about 20 years of age in 1799, when he was listed as a canoe man. He had joined the Company in 1796 and was paid £6 per annum plus an inland bounty of £2. A.30/9, fo. 31.

men at Cumberland House.¹ The two Indians that was going down got lazy and returned back.

June 8, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. proceeded and rowed till 8 p.m. then put up a little short of the Cedar Lake.

June 9, Sunday. Wind easterly a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 3 a.m. proceeded till 9 then put ashore as it blowed fresh. At noon put off again and rowed hard, till a half past 7 p.m. then put up a little more than half way across the lake.

June 10, Monday. Wind and weather much the same. At 5 a.m. proceeded and rowed hard against a head wind till a half past 5 p.m. then arrived at the Great Fall. At half past 8 got the boats down to the basin at the lower end of the carrying place and at 10 got the cargoes all over the carrying place.

June 11, Tuesday. Wind variable light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. At half past 4 a.m. loaded the boats and went down to the lower basin where the canoes were waiting, made no stop but proceeded through the lake² till past 8 p.m. then put up, not being a proper occasion to go all night; much ice in places.

June 12, Wednesday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with cloudy weather. Being a head wind could not proceed.

June 13, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes weather part cloudy part clear. At 3 a.m. proceeded and rowed till 8 p.m. then got out of the lake and put up.

June 14, Friday. Wind variable between SE and WSW with cloudy weather. At half past 3 a.m. proceeded and at 8 came to the Jack River House. Mr Isham has been here all winter and never saw but one Indian since last fall: this is one of Mr Colen's fine trading houses, it certainly has been a very good house for his purpose and that of throwing goods away.³

¹ Fidler remained here until 5 August when, accompanied by Charles Isham and nine men in three canoes, he left 'to make a Settlement at the Green Lake, up the Beaver River'. B.104/a/1. See *infra*, p. 197.

² Lake Winnipeg.

³ See p. 177. On 18 July 1798 twenty-four men arrived from Gordon House at York Factory. Colen's journal entry for that day records: 'These are part of those despatched from Gordon Store Ho. to convey Goods to the Boats, also to Jack and Swan River Settlements, but to my utter surprize the Men & Canoes appointed to the latter Stations are also returned Mr Tomison having taken their Cargoes on their arrival at Trout River. This will be a severe stroke to our pursuits the ensuing season as I fitted out these Canoes purposely to convey a quantity of Goods to Jack River as my intentions were to oppose the Canadians who were in the Bungee Country last Winter within five days Journey of Mr Isham, and this circumstance I communicated to Mr Tomison, who approved the plan very much, yet he alone has overturned the undertaking'. And on 20 July after receiving more news from Gordon House, Colen wrote: 'I am sorry to find that every article packed for Swan and Jack River Settlements are taken up the Saskatchewan together with the *Officers Cloathing*, Grocery & Wine which were equally divided among the *whole* on this Establishment, packed & directed for each particular Settlement separately . . . Not having a proper assortment of articles left in York Ware

At noon put off again, rowed and sailed till a half past 9 p.m. then got all over the Sea River carrying place and put up a little below. Embarked six men from Jack River.¹

June 15, Saturday. Wind westerly a moderate breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 3 a.m. embarked, rowed and sailed till 8, then carried over Eachewemames, and at half past 9 p.m. then put up a mile below the carrying place, a very extraordinary day's work to be made by boats.

June 16, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze with showers of rain at intervals. At 4 a.m. proceeded and at 8 arrived at the White Fall carrying place, got the furs and four boats over by 8 p.m.

June 17, Monday. Wind NW a fresh breeze till the afternoon then varied to the eastward with showers of rain. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4 a.m. got the other two boats across the carrying place and proceeded to the Hill carrying place, got the furs and boats over by 8 p.m., the canoes went away at 4 p.m.

June 18, Tuesday. Wind SE a moderate breeze with clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed and sailed till 12 p.m. then arrived at Oxford House,² found Mr William Sinclair³ and those with him all well and a very good house. Mr Sinclair has exerted himself as far as he could, both in forwarding the building and collecting what furs he could. The three canoes that is here has made one trip from the Rock and returned again

Houses to fit out the Canoes will be a great loss to the Company as it will stop a House being erected this fall in the Red Deers River [present Manitoba] in opposition to the Canadians who collected 140 Bundles of furs this last Season from Indians in that quarter. . . . B.239/a/101.

¹ Two of those remaining were Hugh Sabeston and John Budge. See p. 193. During season 1798–99 Isham's old opponent at Jack River, William McKay, moved to Cross Lake. Isham also operated an outpost at the 'Sea River Lake'. B.154/a/3; B.239/b/66, fo. 84d. Isham's total trade returns for season 1798–99 amounted to 757 made beaver. B.239/d/117, fo. 59d.

² See p. 123, n. 5. William Sinclair arrived at 'the entrance of the holly Lake, where Oxford House is appointed to be built' on 24 July 1798 and on the following day work began on laying the foundation 'of the house 42 feet by 24 broad, which is ordered to be called Oxford House'. Sinclair recorded Tomison arriving on 18 June 1799 'from the upper Country with six large boats & ten Canoes, heavy loaded with Furs'. Sinclair had a complement of twelve, including a cooper, a sawyer and a tailor. There was no Canadian competition in the area and his trade at the end of the season was 2254 made beaver. B.156/a/1; B.239/d/117, fo. 59d.

³ William Sinclair (?1766–1818), known as the 1st to distinguish him from three contemporaries of that name on the York Inland establishment, was listed for outfit 1798–99 as a trader at £40 per annum and as being about 28 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 33. He came from 'Harra' (Harray), Mainland, Orkney Islands, and was the father of the future Chief Factor William Sinclair, and the James Sinclair who led two parties of Red River settlers to Oregon. William Sinclair 1st was 'a good Trader, a Steady Man, and belov'd by the Natives'. A.30/8, fo. 37. An allowance of £10 per annum was paid by the Company to Humphrey Marten, Chief at York Fort, for a servant and it was in this capacity that Sinclair first went to Hudson Bay in 1782. Nine days after his arrival at York he was made prisoner by the French (under La Pérouse), but he returned there with Marten in 1783. Sinclair joined the Company as a labourer in 1786 and then became steward at York Factory. He went back to the Orkneys in 1790 on account of ill-health and after returning to Hudson Bay in 1792 (this time as a writer) he was employed for several years in the Nelson River area. Sinclair was to remain in charge at Oxford House until 1812. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on William Sinclair, 1st.

with one of the Swan River canoes, having left the other three here. The two canoes that went to Jack River, one of which was built last season, are both destroyed through carelessness, and Mr Isham with ten men waiting our arrival.

June 19, Wednesday. Wind southerly a strong breeze weather for the most part clear. Unloaded the boats and canoes.

June 20, Thursday. Wind westerly a strong breeze weather for the most part clear. The blowing weather prevented our getting the boats loaded with stones and laid off as last year, finding this method to answer better than filling them of water.

June 21, Friday. Wind as yesterday with clear moderate weather. In the morning loaded the boats with stones and put them to anchor in a safe place, one excepted which the carpenter is to repair. At 2 p.m. sent off eight canoes with furs for the Rock, manned with thirty-two men. In the evening stowed away the remainder of the furs and boats rigging into the house and got ready for embarking tomorrow, God willing.

June 22, Saturday. Wind NE a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked with six canoes for the Rock House and have left Magnus Twat and several more to raft wood and build a store house,¹ also have left Nichol Spence to repair the boats. Paddled till a half past 8 p.m. then put up in the Knee Lake.

June 23, Sunday. Wind westerly a fresh breeze weather as yesterday. At half past 2 a.m. we proceeded and at 8 p.m. put up on the second carrying place in Hill River.

June 24, Monday. Wind and weather much the same as yesterday. At half past 3 a.m. we proceeded and in the afternoon arrived at Gordon House where we found Mr John Ballanden² and those with him all well.

June 25, Tuesday. Wind northerly a small breeze with rain in the forenoon, afterwards cleared up. Sent off four canoes for Oxford House with goods and provisions, also sent one down to York for necessary stores wanted inland. Being rendered unable to conduct inland affairs by the wound I received on the 15th April which will I fear induce me to

¹ The foundations of 'the new House', 26 x 16 feet, were laid on 27 June. B.156/a/1. This addition was no doubt intended to fit in with Tomison's plan of closing Jack River House and transferring Isham and the men still under contract to the Saskatchewan River area. P. 175; B.239/a/101, 29 July 1799.

² John Ballanden, or Ballenden, (b. *circa* 1758), who had succeeded Joseph Colen at York Factory in 1798. Ballanden came from Stromness, Orkney Islands, and began his working life in Hudson Bay in 1770 as an indentured servant to Andrew Graham. In 1775 he was accepted by the Company as a writer at £15 per annum and he was at Fort Prince of Wales when that place was destroyed by the French under La Pérouse in 1782. Ballanden returned to Hudson Bay in 1783 as assistant to Humphrey Marten at York Fort. See p. xiv, n. 1. From September 1786 until August 1796 he was master at Severn River and it was after an absence in Europe of two years that he succeeded Colen. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file on John Ballanden.

return to England should it please God to spare me till the arrival of your honours' ship. The number of men whose times expire this year raises great confusion and few of them will agree to your honours' terms.¹

June 26, Wednesday. Wind NW a moderate breeze with showers of rain. The men busy taking up their necessities out of the warehouse.

June 27, Thursday. Wind as yesterday clear fine weather. Still busy with the men.

June 28, Friday. Wind variable weather part cloudy part clear. Laid out the cargoes for seven canoes to embark tomorrow. Find the men very difficult to please almost in every article, chiefly owing to their being too liberally supplied last fall and this spring that made trips from this to Oxford House; the brandy they would not take, being a gallon for each canoe for the trip, because those that had made a trip this spring had two gallons per man, which I thought was too extravagant for ten or twelve days, and other provisions were in proportion. I have served those out that are to return twelve days provisions and one gallon of brandy for four men. Some few took it but others would not have it and went without. Mr Balanden set off for York Factory.

June 29, Saturday. Wind westerly a small breeze with clear weather. Embarked seven canoes and fitted out six more to go off tomorrow.

June 30, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 7 a.m. embarked six canoes for Oxford House with goods and provisions.² At noon two boats arrived from York with goods.

July 1, Monday. Wind in the NE quarter first part foggy with rain latter clear weather in the afternoon. Loaded the boats ready for going off early in the morning.

July 2, Tuesday. Wind SW a fresh breeze with clear weather. At 6 a.m. the boats embarked for York, and at 3 p.m. Gilbert Laughton arrived from York, brought a cargo of goods and stores but no provisions; rested part of the cargo here and sent eight bales of cloth and blankets in lieu.

July 3, Wednesday. Wind SW a moderate breeze with warm weather, till the evening afterwards a heavy rain attended with thunder and

¹ Ballanden left York Factory for Gordon House on 14 June 1799 and when back at the factory on 1 July following wrote, 'Yesterday I arrived from Gordon House. . . I cannot help remark to your Honours that the chief point I had for visiting that Settlement was to settle terms with the men respecting their contracts which was the most difficultest task I ever undertook - from time to time they have hitherto been only engaged for one year - now their times being all expired at once. They did not hesitate to think & tell me that they would get their own terms or leave the service. So one and all declared for home or extraordinary wages which I was determined not to comply with, finding me not to deviate - several came afterwards and entered into Contracts at what your Honours offered them. . .'. B.239/a/101.

² The canoes were under the direction of James Bird who, during Tomison's absence in Europe, was 'to take charge of all the settlements in that quarter now subordinate to York'. See p. 191.

lightning. At 7 a.m. Gilbert Laughton embarked for inland, loaded with brandy, cloth, blankets, baize, and the useful articles of stores wanted inland.

July 4, Thursday. Wind variable with thunder and rain towards evening.

July 5, Friday. Wind NW a fresh breeze with clear weather thundered and rained much in the night.

July 6, Saturday. Wind easterly a moderate breeze with clear weather. At 5 p.m. John Paplay and his party arrived from Oxford House, brought forty-nine bundles of furs, Mr Hallet and Mr Sutherland passengers.

July 7, Sunday. Wind ESE a gentle breeze with clear hot weather. Fitted out John Paplay and party ready for embarking tomorrow; he is an excellent servant and very expeditious and careful.

July 8, Monday. Wind variable with clear hot weather. At 5 a.m. embarked John Paplay and party for Oxford House. Made up some packages for Swan River and Cumberland.

July 9, Tuesday. Wind SW a fresh breeze weather as yesterday.

July 10, Wednesday. Wind southerly a fresh breeze with much thunder and rain towards evening.

July 11, Thursday. Wind variable weather part cloudy part clear with rain at times.

July 12, Friday. Wind variable from west to north a fresh breeze cloudy weather, with rain at times. At 11 a.m. seven canoes returned from Oxford House, brought eighty-nine bundles of furs, the bad weather they have had has prevented them from arriving sooner.¹

July 13, Saturday. Wind easterly with thick rainy weather all day.

July 14, Sunday. Wind as yesterday a moderate breeze with clear fine weather. The canoes detained here for want of provisions; no provisions being sent up by the boats last trip is very hurtful in forwarding business and the people half starved.

July 15, Monday. Wind variable fresh breezes with clear hot weather. Sent six men down the river to look for the boats, at 3 p.m. returned and informs they were coming, at 5 they arrived, brought sundry packages of trading goods with provisions for this place and twenty-four bags of oatmeal and 45 lbs. of flour for inland.²

July 16, Tuesday. Wind SW a small breeze with fine weather. Laid out cargoes for six canoes and served the men their provisions, also loaded the boats with furs ready to embark tomorrow.

July 17, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Embarked three

¹ For a copy of the letter from James Bird received by Tomison on this day, see p. 187.

² For a copy of the letter from John Ballanden received by Tomison on this day, see p. 188.

boats and one canoe loaded with furs for York; also embarked with six canoes for Oxford House, could not load them deep as the water has fallen off very much, being two feet less than it was three weeks ago, paddled and carried till 7 p.m. then put up.

July 18, Thursday. Wind WSW a fresh breeze with very hot weather. At 3 a.m. embarked, paddled, handed and carried till 7 p.m. then put up four miles through the Swampy Lake. At 3 p.m. met John Paplay and his party on their journey down loaded with fifty-five bundles of furs being all that remained.

July 19, Friday. Wind variable light breezes with hot weather attended with very heavy thunder and lightning which set the woods on fire on both sides of the lake, some of which was not half mile from us. At 3 a.m. we proceeded, paddled and sailed till half past 8 p.m. then put up half way through Maskechewan or Knee Lake.

July 20, Saturday. Wind variable from WSW to NW light breezes with very hot weather. At 3 a.m. we proceeded, paddled, handed and carried till 7 p.m. then arrived at Oxford House where we found Mr Sinclair and those with him all well, and have got a very good storehouse built to laying the floors, pointing and covering with bark. I must say there is a wide difference between Gordon House and this, the former is a dirty hole not fit to put goods into but the latter will do credit both to men and master.

July 21, Sunday. Wind in the north quarter a fresh breeze cloudy weather with rain most part of the day. At 7 a.m. two canoes arrived, also late in the evening the other three came.

July 22, Monday. Wind northerly a moderate breeze weather part cloudy part clear. Served out twenty men their provisions and other necessaries and laid out cargoes for two boats; the other two obliged to leave here for want of men to man them.

July 23,¹ Tuesday. Wind variable between east and SE a gentle breeze with fine weather. At 7 a.m. embarked two boats for the upper settlements, also sent two canoes to bring the stores and trading goods from Jack River; these have orders to assist the boats over the Hill and White Fall carrying places.

July 24, Wednesday. Wind variable from SE to west first part clear latter cloudy with a little rain. Inspected the trading goods and provisions left here.

July 25, Thursday. Wind variable light breezes with rain at times. At 5 a.m. embarked four [? five] light canoes for Gordon House, paddled till 8 p.m. then put up half through the Knee Lake.

¹ For a copy of Tomison's letter of this date to James Bird en route to Cumberland House, see p. 188.

July 26, Friday. Wind WSW a gentle breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 4 a.m. embarked, sailed and paddled till a half past 7 p.m. then put up ten miles down Hill River.

July 27, Saturday. Wind variable almost calm with clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. we proceeded, paddled and carried till 2 p.m. then arrived at Gordon House.

July 28, Sunday. Wind in the south quarter light breezes with hot weather. At half past 4 a.m. embarked with four canoes for York with the remainder of the furs, nine bundles excepted which I left for two light canoes which is to come down about 10th of next month, paddled till half past 8 p.m. then put up four miles below Steel River.

July 29,¹ Monday. Wind SE a fresh breeze weather part cloudy part clear. At 3 a.m. we proceeded and paddled till 2 p.m. then arrived at York Factory, found Mr Ballanden and all at York well. At 7 a.m. met three canoes on their journey to Gordon House, but there being no pressing occasion for their going I therefore took them back in expectation of being able to engage some of the men to go to Swan River.

William Tomison.

Correspondence

William Tomison to Joseph Colen, York Factory

At the Head of Trout River

10 July 1798

Dear Sir, We embarked from the Rock on the first instant at 5 p.m. with five canoes, having sent off ten canoes before and left seven to come away tomorrow as they did not wish to go off so late. We continued going on very smartly until the 6th at 4 p.m. when we arrived at this place with some others that worked sharply, some arrived the next day and the rest on the day following; it being Saturday and Sunday when most of the men arrived little could be done in regard to the building, but the worst of all some of those that returned grumbled² about the provisions, namely on

¹ For copies of the letters exchanged between John Ballanden and Tomison on 29 July, see pp. 189-90.

² Colen entered a copy of Tomison's letter in the correspondence book kept at York Factory (B.239/b/66, fos. 50d.-51), but made no marginal comments. In the York Factory letter book, 1796-98, sent to London (B.239/b/60) he underlined 'Grumbled' in red ink and made the following marginal comments: 'Served out to Canoes at Gordon House 30 June Flour for 22 Canoes at 120 lbs.

account of the present mood I have preserved in regard to that article which is as follows: finding there was not a sufficient quantity to divide equally for want of bags induced me to put it into the canoes as nearly as it could be done without dividing, and to eat out of the stock until this day, when I ordered every canoe to bring in the remains which some brought with great reluctance, others brought freely. I then served out to those that returns flour to three men 18 lbs., oatmeal 2 gallons, barley 1 gallon, rice $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon, everything else having been expended before they came here. The remainder I divided amongst those who proceed inland which came to each man's share as follows: flour 25 lbs., oatmeal 3 gallons and 1 quart, barley 1 gallon, rice $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon, and there still remains 200 lbs. flour, 9 gallons of rice, 5 gallons of barley and 24 gallons of oatmeal which is to be divided between the four houses up the Seskechawen River;¹ so that you need not put yourself to the trouble of sending any up of those necessaries. Sir, as you know that the assortment of goods now sent is the worst ever sent inland, I have therefore to make the best out of the worst have taken all up the river Seskechawen, one canoe excepted² which I have sent to Jack River, and have returned fifteen canoes from this place; three I have along with the boats which is absolutely necessary and three remains here. Could do nothing towards the building³ more than to bring fifty pieces of wood and by the account of those in our absence, have cut down eighty more which is not brought. You will please to send up by those that come up Seskechawan, cloth blue common, red common, red fine, guns $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet 4 cases, 3 feet 4 cases, powder 9 kegs, sugar loaf 60 lbs., brown 120 lbs., no brandy nor rum, and stores that you find indented for which is not sent, paint white 1 gallon keg, red 1 gallon, and linseed oil 2 gallons, and blankets three-point 50, $2\frac{1}{2}$ [-point] 30. Have sent the package book expenses, furs traded, and goods remaining at Edmonton

Ea. = 2640 lbs.; Oatmeal do. 16 Galls. 352 Galls. = 2816 lbs.; Rice do. 3 Galls. ea. 66 Galls. = 528 lbs.; Scotch Barley 4 Galls. ea. 88 Galls. = 704 [lbs.]. Besides Biscuits, Bacon, Cheese, Butter, Raisons, Molasses, & exclusive of Bags Provisions p. Officers &c. Mr Tomison must have made a mistake in setting down the Remains of provisions. The Stock taken from the Rock Store is well known deduct what he served out to the Men leaves the remains as under 1320 lbs. of flour 248 lbs. of Scotch Barley 292 lbs. of Rice 1584 lbs. of Oatmeal. The Men had twelve days provisions allowance each in *Biscuits, Cheese, Bacon, Butter* &c &c besides pemicon when they left Gordon House – from that place to Trout River is no more than 6 days Journey – so that the people could not consume these articles of provision before he called in the Flour, Rice, Oatmeal & Scotch Barley, at Trout River. 42 Men accompanied Messrs Tomison Bird & [James] Sutherland [3rd] 45 men returned to YF in 15 Canoes. So that a larger Stock of Provisions is taken Inland this Year than has been for any three years before. But I am rather inclined to think that a larger stock of each article is served out to the Men than Mr T. has specified – & done with the view that other officers may follow this plan in future – which woud create animosities & disention among the people.' (Fo. 25d.).

¹ Viz. Cumberland, Carlton, Buckingham and Edmonton Houses.

² P. 170, n. 3.

³ Of Oxford House.

House. So conclude with wishing you an early and safe arrival of the ship, and remains dear sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

John Ballanden to William Tomison

Letter received November 16th 1798.

York Factory

10 September

Dear Sir, On the 6th instant I arrived at this place after a most tedious voyage, the honourable Company having appointed me to succeed Mr Colen who is to return to England per the ship, since which time I have been chiefly employed in fitting out the canoes with trading goods: little or none were remaining in the warehouse on the ship's arrival, which obliged me to open most of the cargo that came out before I could get the assortment you and the gentlemen of inland wanted. They are now on the eve of embarking and sincerely wish they may get to their destined places in good time; am sorry to say the lateness of the ship's arrival has prevented me from executing every commission wanted, therefore I hope it will plead an excuse for me as well should any error arise in the packages. In future it shall be my study to pay every attention in my power according to your order. Being hurried to get the ship away prevents me from being more particular, therefore I beg leave to remain with every mark of respect dear Sir your obedient humble servant, John Ballanden.

P.S. Mr George Sutherland has applied to me to request of you to permit his son¹ to come down to the Factory next summer as it is his determination if possible to bring him to England. JB.

¹ John Sutherland, apprentice, was born in Rupert's Land and joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1795 when about 16 years of age. A.30/7, fo. 38; A.30/9, fo. 39. George Sutherland's request for a passage for his son was allowed by the Committee (A.6/16, p. 133) and the young man reached York Factory on 19 July 1799 (B.239/a/101), but though his name was not included in the lists of passengers who sailed from Hudson Bay that year either aboard the *King George* or *Queen Charlotte* the 1799 letter from Tomison and Council to the Governor and Committee makes it clear that he was given a passage. C.1/406; C.1/1017; B.239/b/79, fo. 29d. Six days after John's arrival at York Factory two 'young Women' were accidentally drowned, one of them being 'a Daughter of Mr Geo. Sutherlands'. B.239/a/101.

Joseph Colen to William Tomison

Letter received November 16th 1798.

York Fort

10 September 1798

Sir, Mr George Sutherland having applied to the Council to have his son John brought to York next summer in order that he may be sent to England by the Company's ship, Mr Sutherland intends making application for that purpose to the honourable Committee. You are therefore requested to order John Sutherland to be accommodated with a passage by the first canoes that leaves Cumberland in the spring.

Mr Ballandeen being appointed in my room at this place, he writes you officially respecting next year's pursuits which leaves little room for me to say anything more than sending you my best wishes and a sincere hope that the Company's pursuits may be more productive than they have been for years past. I remain with wishing also that every happiness and success may attend them, and all your lawful endeavours I remain your obedient servant, Josh. Colen.

William Sinclair to William Tomison

Letter received November 16th 1798.

Oxford House

26 September 1798

Dear Sir, Mr Oman and party arrived here the 25 instant. The lateness of the season together with a great fall of snow and all appearance of a very timely fall, obliged Mr Oman to leave the two-thirds of the cargo at this settlement. Many of the bundles is got a little wet, one seron of Spencers twist is very much damaged and am afraid part of it will be lost. The house built is called Oxford House, its length 42 feet by 24 width; as I got no orders to build a house of length or breadth, I was entirely at a loss how to act, but I flatter myself that which I have done will meet your approbation. The goods left here I shall take care that no wet shall get near them while they remain here, but if they are got any damage on their passage before they arrived here I hope it will not be laid to my carelessness or neglect. I remain dear Sir your obedient humble servant, William Sinclair.

Peter Fidler to William Tomison

Letter received November 16th 1799 [1798].

Cumberland House

16 October 1799 [1798]¹

Dear Sir, Messrs. Oman and Pruden only arrived here yesterday in four canoes from the Factory, which place they left the 11th September. The unparalleled severity of the weather and the early setting in of the fall occasioned their leaving all the trading goods at Oxford House at the head of Trout River. They only brought here three bundles of goods, two of which consists entirely of men's things, one keg of powder, one keg of liquor, one roll of tobacco and two cases of guns, which was all the cargo the four canoes brought up. There is not a net line brought up though particularly idented for; what we shall do for want of them the ensuing winter I know not as there is not one here either to overhaul a net or line it with.² There are neither blankets or cloth here to supply the few natives that are about this place, therefore am under the necessity of keeping the only bundle of cloth that was brought up which is fine light blue though at the same time the natives prefer the common kind. I am therefore under the necessity of sending Mr Oman and three men in a canoe to Mr Bird for blankets, cloth etc. in case he can supply us. Indeed if he cannot the trade of this place will very much suffer for want of those articles. Mr Pruden with three canoes and twelve men accompanys Mr Oman up the river: they are to proceed forward to the upper settlement. So conclude with wishing you a good trade and remains your most obedient humble servant, Peter Fidler.

Mitchel Oman to William Tomison

Letter [received] November 16th 1798.

Cumberland House

17 October 1798

Dear Sir, The safe but late arrival of the honourable Company's ship commanded by Captain John Richards, I used all the means you told me

¹ Fidler's copy of this letter is in B.49/a/29, fo. 10-10d.

² For numerous references to the importance of sturgeon-fishing in Cumberland Lake, see *H.B.R.S.*, XIV and XV. David Thompson wrote of sturgeon weighing from fifteen to fifty lbs. and of the oil collected being sufficient for two lamps at night the year round. Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), p. 44. On 14 January 1799 Fidler recorded that the largest sturgeon so far was caught that day. It 'weighed 90 lbs. and measured 5.7½ from the tip of the nose to the extremity of the Tail & measured 2.7½ round the Belly'. B.49/a/29.

but I could not get the things equal to my wishes.¹ Mr Colen took our canoes from us and loaded them so that they were broke more than either you or any person has known. In short the goods that we left at Oxford House² is all spoiled, and the snow was fourteen inches on the ground and the lake (Holy) was part froze over. I did not think of getting up but meant to endeavour to the last moment, the canoes was so broken that there was no possibility of getting the cargo up safe; you and I never saw the like before. I understand that Mr Fidler has got neither cloth, blankets etc. and I was told at the Factory that there was more goods sent inland than would be used in two years. James Sandison's canoe was so much broke that I was obliged to leave her for that, she would not float an hour and we picked up one that had been thrown away by you. The goods before mentioned I told Mr Sinclair to open and dry because you nor I have ever known such, so much damaged. Wishing you health and a good trade and remain your humble servant, Mitchel Oman.

¹ Oman was, apparently, the 'fit person' sent to York Factory by Tomison to get the special supply of trading goods reserved for his use in the Saskatchewan District. See p. lxi. Ballanden wrote from York Factory to J. P. Whitford at Gordon House on 18 November 1798 and after requesting to know how William Tomison required to have his goods packed added, 'Mr Tomisons Trading Goods, Stores, &c came out for England marked for him, but from the lateness of the Ships arrival I was obliged to send part to Settlements not immediately under his Eye: had I waited for the Goods consigned to this place until they were landed it would have detained the People from going Inland as it was they waited too long and I am sorry to find that the Chief part of the Goods sent did not reach further than Oxford House. What still remains of his are carefully put by. Let me know if the Knives & other small Articles will answer by Packing in Boxes, and the Hatchets in small Rundlets'. B.239/b/62, fos. 8d.-9. Whitford replied on 2 December, 'I shall only state a few particular articles. Mr Tomison's wish is that no Cloth be Packed less than 22 or 23 yards as it may happen; Hatchets to be put in Cloth, or Blankets to the Number of 16 or 20 of them; & if lighter articles such as Shirts of any Sort not less than 6 or 8, Stockings Yarn 6 pr., Sashes 20 and in Proportion other light articles in large Numbers. Avoid packing trinkets such as Medals, Broaches, Bracelets &c for Mr Tomison will not have them [cf. p. 114, n. 1]. The Knives, Files, & Bayonets Pack up in Boxes, no more Hatchets to be Packed in Rundlets as they are Weighty & hard Carrying it is his wish if the Hats could be Packed in Boxes to be filled up with small articles such as Awls Steels, Cotton &c for the Hats get much damaged by being sewed in Canvas, the High Spirits must not be less than 7 or 8 Gallons Rundlets if under they will only be started and remain here which will cause a great many mistakes with respect to their Numbers, I hope this will be a guide to you . . .'. *Ibid.*, fos. 9d.-10.

² Oman's bad passage from York to Oxford House, where he arrived on the night of 24 September, had been caused by low water, ice, heavily-laden canoes, and deep snow on the ground. Most of the 'young hands' were 'badly' on arrival at Oxford House. B.239/b/66, fo. 70d.

James Bird to William Tomison

Letter received November 16th 1798.

Setting River¹

31 October 1798

Dear Sir, Mr Pruden with sixteen men in four canoes (one of which came from Cumberland House for goods but was prevented from returning by the ice) carrying three pieces of trading goods arrived at Carleton House 23 instant, and on the 24th three canoes embarked for this place but was stopped by the ice a little above the mouth of the [South] Branch river, where we left everything with two men to take care of it and proceeded by land.

It's unnecessary for me to inform you that we are in want of several articles of trading goods, particularly cloth, blankets, awls, steels, gunworms etc. Mr Fidler is also very much in want of the same articles of trading goods and others; a part that he writes for we can supply him with. I shall detain his men here till I hear from Buckingham House (as I imagine he will not be much in want of them as he has still five men at Cumberland House) in case you should think proper to send down any cloth or blankets. I have left James Sandison in charge of Carleton House with a few men, I imagine there will be no furs to be had there than wolves. There are very few Indians at this place save Bungees; we were made to expect several from above but they are not yet arrived. I intended sending up four men but as they cannot take anything with them have sent only two with Mr Pruden and lent them a horse to carry the packet etc. There are only two bundles and a keg here (the contents of which you will see in the invoice which is sent you) should you think proper to send for them. I have kept here six yards of flannel, a roll of tobacco and a padlock. Carleton House remains is enclosed in the trunk with the letters. We will also be short of powder and spirits for the summer. Nothing will be got here but by running out to the Indians' tents which will be very expensive. The new Company² have built two miles above this so that

¹ Sturgeon River. See p. 141, n. 1. Part only of this letter was copied into Bird's Setting River journal, B.197/a/1, fos. 9d.-10. As the North West Company were building at Setting River Bird sent Magnus Twatt and two men there on 6 September 1798 to erect a post in opposition. About the same time the New North West Company built some two miles higher up the Saskatchewan River. Bird arrived at his Setting River post on 28 October. B.197/a/1, *passim*.

² The New North West Company which, because of the bale marks it used to distinguish its property in transit from that of the North West Company, became known as the XY Company. It was later also called Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company. The original co-partnership agreement included Forsyth, Richardson & Co., Leith, Jamieson & Co., and the six wintering partners, Pierre Rocheblave, Alexander Mackenzie (not Sir Alexander, but 'The Emperor'), John McDonald ('McDonald le Borgne'), James Leith, John Willis [Wills], and John Haldane, and was drawn up and

I suppose I shall be under the necessity of keeping a couple of men beside them in a tent all the winter. I remain Sir your obedient humble servant, James Bird.

William Tomison to Henry Hallett

Edmonton House

25 November [1798]

Dear Sir, By the arrival of Mr Pruden on the 16th instant I received your kind favour of the 13th¹ which gave me pleasure to hear you and those under your direction was in good health and plenty of food; thank God for health but as to provisions we have been in a starving condition ever since our arrival at this place, not being able to serve half allowance and there is no likelihood of its mending and had it not been for the garden stuff it would have been much worse.

I have sent down five packages of trading goods which you will endeavour to forward to Mr James Bird with all possible speed as he is in want of them, not having received those articles by the fall canoes as was expected owing to the early season and the bad canoes they were fitted out with, which induced them to leave the goods at the head of Trout River.

I have sent down the list of Indian debts which is more for a guide to you not to trust them anymore than any expectation of you being able to get any part of them; have also sent forty-eight fire-steels and sixty awl blades and twelve gunworms, and anything you want is here you will please to send for it. The men now sent down stays till those return that you send down to Mr Bird. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and a pleasant winter to you, and remains dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

P.S. I have sent you a runlet of gunpowder No. 31 and you will be particular in sending up your last year's remains by the first conveyance.

signed on 20 October 1798. The wintering partners, who would require to be inland by this time, were presumably represented by their attorneys. See p. 203, n. 2. R. Harvey Fleming, 'The Origin of "Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company" ' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1928), Vol. IX, pp. 137-55; W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 463, 475.

¹ Neither the original nor the copy of this letter has been found.

William Tomison to James Bird

Edmonton House

25 November 1799 [1798]¹

Dear Sir, By the arrival of Mr Pruden on the 16th of November I was favoured with your kind letter of the 31st of October by which I was happy to hear you and all under your direction was in good health, which blessing we enjoy here thank God.

We arrived at Buckingham House the 3rd of September and stopped till the 6th, then embarked for this place where we arrived the 11th, found all well but like the other house not any provisions of any kind and most of the men was out of provisions last night, and since that I have never experienced so miserable a time since I have known inland and no prospect of its mending. While the Indians was coming and going in the fall we made a kind of living, but since they drew off to their wintering ground we have been very ill-of[f], and had it not been for the garden stuff it would have been much worse.

I am sorry to hear the early season has prevented you from receiving the necessary articles of trading goods expected by the return of the fall canoes from York, which will be hurtful to trade. My wish was to have supplied all the houses as I passed but the assortment was not sufficient to supply all, I therefore thought it best to serve the farthest off first, as Cumberland and Carleton Houses would be much easier supplied in the fall than the upper settlements.

I have sent down to Buckingham House to be forwarded to you the following articles of trading goods viz. cloth red corded yards 21½, aurora 22, awl blades 48, fire-steels 48 and gunworms 12. Not a gunworm came up this season and have not given one to an Indian since my arrival, there was only half pound of wire remained here, which was enough for 48 and is 12 for each house; as to hats there is not enough for this place and what is, is of little use being so small as not to fit a boy of ten years of age; blankets large 6 which is all that can be spared. Indeed were the beaver as plenty as they were seven years ago the cloth and blankets received this year indeed would have been little enough for this place, but present there is little prospect of a trade here. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and a pleasant winter to you and all under your direction and remains dear Sir your very humble servant, Willm. Tomison.

P.S. The two large blankets belonging Mr Pruden is to be charged to your account and I pay him for them.

¹ Bird received this letter at the Setting River post on 28 December 1798. B.197/a/1.

William Tomison to Peter Fidler

Edmonton House

25 November 1798¹

Dear Sir, By the arrival of Mr Pruden on the 16th of November I received your kind favour of the 16th of October which gave me pleasure to hear you and those under your direction was in good health, which blessing thank God we enjoy here.

We arrived at Buckingham House on the third of September where we stayed till the sixth making out an assortment of goods. We then embarked for this place where we arrived on the 11th, found all well but no provisions of any kind and since that I have never experienced a more miserable time for that article since I have known inland. While the Indians was coming and going we made a sort of living but since they drew off to their wintering ground it has been miserable.

I am sorry to hear the early season has prevented you from receiving the necessary articles of stores and trading goods wanted at Cumberland House which I wished to have supplied on passing that place, but the assortment we had with us was not sufficient to supply all; therefore I thought it best to serve the farthest off first, as Cumberland and Carleton Houses would be much easier supplied in the fall than the upper settlements; I have sent to Buckingham House to be forwarded to you the following articles viz. cloth blue corded yards $21\frac{3}{4}$, blankets large 6, hatchets middling 12, gunworms 12, awl blades 48 which is all that can be spared. Indeed had there been beaver as formerly all that came here would not have been sufficient. So conclude with wishing success to the Company's affairs, health and happiness to you and all under your direction, and remains dear Sir your obedient humble servant, William Tomison.

P.S. I have also sent you 36 fire-steels.

¹ Fidler received this letter, a copy of which he entered in his Cumberland House journal, on 14 February 1799. B.49/a/29, fo. 20-20d.

James Bird to William Tomison

Letter received February 12th 1799.¹

Setting River

6 January 1799

Dear Sir, By the arrival of three men² from Buckingham House on the 28th ultimo I received your letter as also the goods you were kind enough to send us.

I am sorry to inform you that we are utterly disappointed in our hopes that by building here we should be able to prevail with at least a part of the Indians to hunt the beaver; save the Bungees, all without exception are tenting in the plains, killing buffalo for themselves to eat and catching a few wolves, they have not even [MS: ever] hitherto made any dried provisions so that I am apprehensive that we shall not be able to procure the usual quantity (should our stock of goods admit of it), particularly as the Canadians are said to have a house at the Nut Lake³ (which is nearly at an equal distance from Carleton House, Red Deers, and Swan Rivers) which will probably cut most of the Stone Indians that used to visit Carleton House. Our trade here only consists of 450 made beaver (300 of which is wolves) nor can we even hope that it will increase much, as most of the Indians are going off to a pound where they are assembling in order to form a war party early in the spring. I have not heard from Carleton House since the 10 ultimo but they cannot have more, summer trade included, than about 500 made beaver. No Cumberland House Indians had arrived there.

Be kind enough to let me know should an opportunity offer if you wish us to remain here (should circumstances admit of our leaving the place sooner) till you arrive as it will be necessary for us to be together if possible in order to get the new canoes made.⁴ I remain Sir your obedient humble servant, James Bird.

¹ This letter was received at Edmonton House on 29 January according to Tomison's reply. See n. 4 below.

² One man is named as Benjamin Bruce in Bird's copy of this letter which is entered under 8 January 1799 in the Setting River journal, B.197/a/1.

³ Nut Lake, situated north-west of Kelvington, Saskatchewan, in Township 39, Range 12, West of the Second Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada. Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957). According to Archibald Norman McLeod, who was in charge of the North West Company's Fort Alexandria on the Assiniboine River, his plans to settle Nut Lake during the winter of 1800-1 were 'knocked in the head' owing to shortage of men and goods. Charles M. Gates, editor, *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest. Being the Narrative of Peter Pond and the Diaries of John MacDonell, Archibald N. McLeod, Hugh Faries, and Thomas Connor* (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), p. 126.

⁴ Tomison's reply to this letter was dated 1 February 1799. It was received by Bird on 21 February

James Bird to William Tomison

Letter received July 12 1799.

Oxford House

7 July 1799

Dear Sir, I arrived here the 5th instant, tho part of the canoes did not arrive till yesterday.

I have endeavoured to engage the men who were here but without effect; none of them were willing to enter into contract at this place save Hendry Budge but I believe some of them will be willing to return from Gordon House. Indeed it is absolutely necessary that some should be hired there, otherwise it will be impossible to man even three more boats. Nicholas Spence is willing to return inland for one year at the wages allowed him, and as he is so necessary a man I have kept him here to finish the oars etc. and go up with the next boats unless you should think it improper to accept of his services for a single year only.

I have enclosed an account of the provisions that are here from which you will perceive that we shall have very little more oatmeal than will be necessary to fit out the two boats and six canoes, but there will be a tolerable quantity of flour etc. remaining for the next boats.

I imagine we shall be ready to go off on Tuesday or Wednesday next if Gilbert Laughton arrives in time. I remain Sir your obedient humble servant, James Bird.

and a copy entered in his Setting River journal. Tomison wrote: 'By the arrival of some Canadians on the 29th Janry. from Buckingham House, I receiv'd your kind Letter dated the sixth by which I was happy to hear that you and all under your direction were in good health which blessing thank God we all here enjoy. I am sorry to find you are likely to be disappointed in your expectations in Trade and I am sorry to say I cannot give you any better accounts from this quarter, the Southd. Indians has done nothing but running about from House to House there has been four of them in and brought no more than 40 MBr. amongst the whole; the other tribes have neither killed Wolves nor Foxes as they did last year owing to the want of Snow and what they have brought is far from being good one half of which is thrown away, our Neighbours have repeatedly told them not to bring Wolves, as they would much sooner trade provisions than the former, which article has been very scarce ever since our arrival at this place and no likelihood of amendment we have just been able to keep from starving and at present not more than eight Animals in Stock; pounded Meat about 1400 lbs. but little or no Fatt as yet, as to Trade its far short of last year at this time, being no more than 3800 MBr. Our new Neighbours have done no good but may do much harm. As to your leaving the Setting River House sooner or later, will be according to circumstances should your Opponents leave that place there will be no occasion for you to stay but should there be anything depending & your opponents stay it will not do for you to go down to the other House but to give orders to Magnus Twatt to carry on the Canoe building in the best manner he can.' B.197/a/1, fos. 18d.-19.

John Ballanden to William Tomison

Letter received 15th of July 1799.

York Factory

8 July 1799

Dear Sir, On the 5th instant in the afternoon the *Mercury* and *Charlotte* boats arrived with their cargoes in good condition, since which time I have done my utmost to collect such articles as you requested and are now sent as per list enclosed, also a winter's stock of provisions for Mr Whitford and the men that may remain with him at Gordon House. Am in hopes that the large quantity I have sent up, a great share of it will remain for next spring as the boats going up at that time are more loaded with that article than anything else.

I have been much puzzled to man the boats, having very few men at the factory and out of that few four are in the surgeon's list; however everything is ready for the boats setting off tomorrow morning.

Am sorry to inform you that York warehouse are as empty of goods of every description as it was ever known but as you will have an opportunity of inspecting them shall not dwell on a disagreeable subject. Wishing a happy sight of you at York and those gentlemen that intends visiting it, I remain Dear Sir your obedient humble servant, John Ballanden.

William Tomison to James Bird

Oxford House

23 July 1799

Dear Sir, On the 20th instant we arrived here, being the fourth day from the Rock. The canoes was detained here from the 12th to the 17th by the boats not arriving sooner on account of bad weather. I could not load the canoes so much as usual by reason of the water having fallen off very much. I have only been able to man two boats for want of men which will hardly be sufficient to draw them over the carrying places, notwithstanding I have put Magnus Twat and James Vallin,¹ cooper, extra men to assist on the carrying places. I have loaded them with the most necessary goods wanted to the best of my judgment but the packages being so large I could not send the number of pieces as usual, there not being room to stow them. I have been obliged to serve those men a little more provisions than you did on account of their having eat up a good part of their country

¹ James Vallin (Vazlian) from Stenness, Mainland, Orkney Islands, joined the Company in 1797 and in 1799 was listed as a cooper at £20 per annum. He was then about 32 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 41.

provisions here. Thank God I have the pleasure to inform you that I am much better than when you left me. You will receive enclosed the invoice of goods, men's debts, etc. So conclude wishing success to the Company's affairs, a pleasant passage to your wintering ground, and remain Dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

John Ballanden to William Tomison

Letter received July 29th 1799

York Fort

27 July 1799

Dear Sir, The boats and canoes with their cargoes arrived safe and am at present employed getting the furs repacked. It gives me great concern to find the provisions run short this season in serving out the men for their journey inland, as one-third more was sent up to the Rock than was ever known in any one year. I have dispatched John Paplay and eleven men in three canoes with as much flour, oatmeal etc. as it is in my power to spare or they can at present convey, the water being very shoal for loaded canoes. This supply will I hope in a great measure prevent grumbling among the men, particularly those that may be employed making trips between Oxford House and the Rock.

You mention Mr Longmoor having a wish to resume his former station at Swan River. I have persuaded him all in my power not to neglect the present opportunity but to return as fast as possible so as to gain time before the Canadians arrives in his quarter, but to no effect will he be prevailed upon to go back until shiptime. As Mr Longmoor's goods for Swan River lays at Gordon House I have done my utmost to engage men to carry it thither, but the few men that arrived will not be prevailed upon, one or two excepted, as their time is expired and their determination is for England. Halcro,¹ Mr Longmoor's pilot, positively refused, having hurt himself on his journey down. As you will have an opportunity of seeing the men I sincerely wish you will settle this point, particularly as I left all the papers respecting settling with the men with you when I left Gordon House. I have also to request that you will before your arrival settle the number of canoes that is to make trips between Oxford House and the Rock. Wishing a happy sight of you and all that intends visiting York. I remain with respect Dear Sir your obedient servant, John Ballanden.

¹ James Halcro (Halcrow) from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, was ' Good Steersman & Pilot', and about 28 years old in 1799. He joined the Company in 1789. A.30/9 fo.33.

William Tomison to John Ballanden

29 July 1799

Dear Sir, At half past 6 this morning your kind favour I received with pleasure to hear the boats and canoes had arrived with their cargoes safe and in good condition. Sir, my reason for taking the three canoes back are as follows: in the first place they were much nearer to this [York Factory] than the Rock, secondly no canoes being sent to Swan River and some of the men from that place being in company induced me to bring them back as their present cargoes will serve the next canoes that may go up, as I imagine you cannot spare much more provisions at present but what they have with them.

Dear Sir, I will allow you have sent a great quantity of provisions to Gordon House this season but you will please to consider the number of men and the quantity expended at Gordon House as also that served out to those who make trips to the head of Trout River. I can assure what was received at Oxford House is not embezzled or made wantonly away with. I must acknowledge the men would not be able to work the boats to Cumberland House on the allowance served out to them was it not for the country provisions they carry down. Flour, oatmeal, barley, and rice are all very good in their kind but when men that labours so hard as they do, comes to live upon that only it cannot be called good living. There is a true account of what provisions remains at Oxford House, as also at Gordon House, brought down for your inspection. I am sorry to find Mr Longmoor cannot be prevailed upon to go to Swan River before the ship arrives as that may be too late. I understood he did not mean to do so when he left the Rock, he having had what dry goods was wanted for that place already packed before we parted. I did all in my power to engage the men whose times are out but none of them could be prevailed upon but Edward Tomison, Oman Northquoy and George Robertson.¹ The former I have engaged to take care of Oxford House in Mr Sinclair's absence as he wishes to come down to York to settle matters. I remain with due respect Dear Sir your very humble servant, William Tomison.

¹ George Robertson (Robinson), listed for season 1798-99 as a bowsman at £14 per annum. He came from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and joined the Company in 1791 when he was about 18 years of age. A.30/9, fo. 37.

JOURNAL OF JAMES BIRD

1799-1800

A Diary of the Transactions and Occurrences at Edmonton House and on the Passage from and to Gordon House by Mr James Bird.¹

1799

June 30, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly clear weather. At 7 a.m. embarked² with six canoes in company. Encamped at the Burnt Wood carrying place. The copy of a letter received from Mr John Ballanden.

Mr James Bird, Gordon House, June 27th 1799.

Sir, Mr Tomison being unable to resume his former station inland on account of the accident which has lately so unfortunately befallen him,³ you are hereby authorized and directed to proceed inland and to take charge of all the settlements in that quarter now subordinate to York, which you are to supply as far as in your power with a proper assortment of trading goods and other necessities suitable to, and requisite to the several stations.

Mr Longmoor⁴ not choosing to return to Swan River, Mr Howse⁵ is appointed to take the command in his room, being every way qualified and generally approved as a fit person for that station. I have however been given to understand that the Honourable Company's servants may be more advantageously employed in some other part of the country; this matter I recommend to your serious consideration. If you should ultimately be of this opinion, do not fail to withdraw them from Swan River and to dispose of them in such other way as you shall conceive the most likely to be beneficial to the Honourable Company; and in this case you will

¹ A table of some of the contents of this journal, written in a different hand, appears on the title-page. It reads: 'Men off wages Augst 1st; Men Augst 5th; Joseph Lewis - Letter after Augst 6th; do. Augst 16th; Men Augst 18th; do. Augst 31st; Stony Mountains Sept 20-25; Opposition 10 Octr; Opposition & Athapescow of Letter after 18 Novr; 6 Decr; 2 New Cos. 17 Decr; Feb 14 Letter after'.

² From Gordon House. See p. 173, n. 2.

³ Pp. lxii, lxv.

⁴ See p. 63, n. 1. Longmoor did return to the Swan River District for season 1799-1800. See pp. 223-4, and B.156/a/2, 25 and 26 August 1799.

⁵ Howse did not go to the Swan River District, but wintered 1799-1800 at Carlton House on the Saskatchewan. See pp. 220, 232, 236. For a biography of Howse who became the first Hudson's Bay Company officer to cross the Rocky Mountains, see *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. II, E. E. Rich and R. Harvey Fleming, editors, *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1939, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), pp. 221-3.

appoint Mr Howse to some other settlements where he may have a better opportunity of employing his abilities for the Company's interest.

When you arrive at Cumberland House you are to dispatch six canoes to the northward as Mr Tomison intended to have done had he been able to have returned to Cumberland House. Two of these canoes are to be stationed in the Beaver River and the other four to proceed up it to the Red Deers Lake.¹ Mr Peter Fiddler is deemed the most proper person to conduct this undertaking and Mr Pruden should be sent from Buckingham House to assist him:² as to the other houses prudence will direct you whom to put in charge.

Expedition will be required to gain Cumberland House before the Canadians arrive on account of the Indian guides that stay there and whom Mr Tommison intended to have brought down with him out of their way had they been agreeable to have followed him. Should circumstances not allow you to forward two boats with six canoes immediately on your arrival at Oxford House, you will nevertheless dispatch as much goods as possible you can. Your own discretion will point out to you such other steps as shall be necessary for the attainment of the desired end.

You are to act conformably to these instructions till the orders of the Honourable Committee be more particularly communicated to me on this subject, always observing to adopt such plans and take such measures as shall be most conducive to the interest of our honourable employers. Wishing you ever success I remain Sir your obedient humble servant, signed William Tomison John Ballanden.

July 1, Monday. A fresh gale NW with rain at times. At 5 a.m. embarked and at 6 p.m. encamped on the last carrying place in Hill River.

July 2, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked. Encamped on the long carrying place in Jack River.

July 3, Wednesday. Fresh breezes variable with rain in the afternoon. At 6 a.m. embarked, carried and paddled till 3 p.m. when a gale of wind from SW accompanied with rain obliged us to put ashore on an island in the Knee Lake.

July 4, Thursday. A strong gale NW cloudy weather with showers of rain. At 8 a.m. embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then encamped. Found here seven canoes which left Gordon House the 29th ultimo, passed four canoes wind-bound which are going to Gordon House.

¹ See p. 166.

² Pruden was in charge of Buckingham House for the summer. See p. 168.

July 5, Friday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather: at 4 a.m. embarked, paddled and carried etc. till 4 p.m. when we arrived at Oxford House.¹

July 6, Saturday. A fresh breeze easterly, part clear part cloudy weather. Employed settling the men and giving them provisions etc. who are to return to Gordon House. Two canoes we had left behind arrived.²

July 7, Sunday. Light airs variable weather as yesterday.

July 8, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 7 a.m. twenty-five men embarked in seven canoes loaded with furs for Gordon House. Employed settling the men and giving them provisions etc. who are to proceed inland. Copy of a letter sent to Mr William Tomison.

[See above, p. 187.]

July 9, Tuesday. A fresh breeze SE cloudy weather. Employed assorting cargoes for the boats and canoes etc.

July 10, Wednesday. A fresh breeze ESE. Cloudy weather with heavy showers of rain. At 7 a.m. embarked with two boats and six canoes in company, together carrying upwards of 200 pieces of trading goods for Cumberland House. Rowed, sailed and carried till 7 p.m. then encamped on the upper carrying place on Wippinapanis River.

July 11, Thursday. A fresh gale NW with rain. At 4 a.m. embarked. At 6 the rain obliged us to put ashore. At 12 again embarked, rowed etc. all day and encamped at 8 p.m. on the Hill carrying place.

July 12, Friday. A fresh gale NW cloudy cold weather. At 4 a.m. the men began to carry and by 12 the boats were over the carrying place, we then embarked and arrived at the White Fall at 4 p.m.

July 13, Saturday. Light breeze NW with showers of rain. Men employed carrying goods and hauling boats over the carrying place.

July 14, Sunday. A fresh breeze NE. Cloudy weather with a little rain. At 4 a.m. embarked, paddled and carried till 4 p.m. then put up at a beaver dam in Echewemamis to allow the water time to go down before us.

July 15, Monday. Light airs variable clear sultry weather. Repaired the beaver dam, and at 7 a.m. embarked, paddled, carried and repaired beaver dams to keep a sufficiency of water in the river for the next boats. At 7 p.m. encamped.

July 16, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. embarked and encamped at 7 p.m. near the head of Sea River.

July 17, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. At 3 a.m. embarked, at 7 arrived at Jack River House.³ At 12 o'clock we set off again, took Hugh Sabeston and John Budge with us, the former to accompany Mr

¹ William Sinclair's Oxford House journal entry for this day recorded the arrival at 2 p.m. [*sic*] of 'Messrs. Bird & Oman . . . with nine Canoes from Gordon House'. B.156/a/1.

² Joseph Howse, passenger, was with the canoes. *Ibid.*

³ This post was to be closed. See p. 175.

Fidler to Beaver River and the latter to assist in enabling us to take up two canoes from Cumberland House in case the Canadians may have built above Edmonton House and it should prove impracticable to follow them with boats. Encamped in Play Green Lake near Lake Winnipeg.

→ *July 18, Thursday.* Fresh breezes SE clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. embarked sailed and rowed till 10 p.m. then encamped on a small island in Lake Winnipeg.

July 19, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked rowed and paddled etc. till 10 p.m. then encamped in sight of the Great Rapid.

July 20, Saturday. Light breezes NW. Cloudy weather with rain in the afternoon. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 arrived at the bottom of the rapid. At 8 one boat and five canoes, all lightened, set off up the fall, returned and went up again with the remaining part of their cargoes. The boatmen arrived again at the bottom of the fall.

July 21, Sunday. A fresh breeze northerly. Cloudy weather inclinable to rain. At 5 a.m. one canoe arrived from the carrying place to assist up with the boats cargoes, and at 7 set off up the rapid with the boat in company, at 10 arrived at the carrying place.

July 22, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed carrying and hauling the boats over the carrying place.

July 23, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NE. Clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked, rowed, sailed and carried till 9 p.m. then encamped at the narrow of the Cedar Lake, the canoes in company.

July 24, Wednesday. a.m. light breezes SE, p.m. a fresh breeze easterly part clear part cloudy weather. At 3 a.m. embarked, sailed and rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped a little beyond the Cedar Lake, canoes in company.

July 25, Thursday. A fresh breeze NE clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, sailed, rowed, handed and carried till 9 p.m. then encamped in Saskatchewan River. Canoes in head.

July 26, Friday. Light airs variable part clear part cloudy sultry weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed till 7 p.m. then encamped, canoes still in head.

July 27, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped a little below Busquiau. Canoes in head.

July 28, Sunday. A.M. fresh breezes SE clear weather, p.m. variable with heavy showers of rain thunder and lightning.

July 29, Monday. A strong gale NW. Cloudy weather with showers of rain. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped at the mouth of the little river.

July 30, Tuesday. A strong gale west to NW cloudy weather with showers of rain. At 3 a.m. embarked, rowed and tracked till 1 p.m. when we arrived in sight of Cumberland House where the wind obliged us to remain. At 5 p.m. unloaded a boat and set off for Cumberland House where we arrived at 8 and had the pleasure to find Mr Fidler and men all well.¹

July 31, Wednesday. A fresh breeze northerly cloudy weather. At 8 a.m. the canoes and boats arrived. The copy of a letter received from Mr Pruden.

Buckingham House, June 17th 1799.

Sir, I embrace opportunity of informing you how affairs are going on in this quarter. In the first place there are six Canadians in a canoe belonging the N.W. Company gone up the river near to the edge of the Stonney Mountain to build a house which I understand is about 30 days journey from Edmonton.² Also three more Canadians with some Indians went by land to a place the Indians call the Wolfes Track,³ which is a long narrow plain that leads down to the river opposite to where they are going to build. Secondly, Mr. King⁴ went from Edmonton House with two men and made a serpentine round the Summer Berry River,⁵ fell in

¹ The Cumberland House journal, like so many others for outfit 1799–1800, has not survived.

² They had gone to establish the Rocky Mountain House. See pp. 208, 209. Thirty days was a big over-estimate. Bird's men travelling by boat later that season to establish the rival Acton House took eighteen days to reach the site. See pp. 209, 211, 212.

³ James Bird, travelling overland from Edmonton House to 'the Stoney Mountain' in the following September to meet his river party (see note above), must have passed over or near the Wolf's Track on the 18th of that month. See pp. 209–11. David Thompson (1800) spoke of certain Wolf Track meadows in the neighbourhood of Wolf Creek which falls into Battle River at Section 34, Township 42, Range 26, West of the Fourth Meridian. See Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799–1814* (New York, 1897), II, 636–7.

⁴ Identified as James King of the North West Company because: (1) he had been to Lac la Biche where the new opposition, Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy, had not yet gone (p. 203, n. 2), and (2) he went down to the post under construction at Turtlelake River before Henry Hallett arrived there (p. 207, n. 3) to build Somerset House for the Hudson's Bay Company, and before the two 'small oppositions' (p. 182, n. 2; p. 203, n. 2) also arrived. King, having been in the employ of 'Grants Company' at Edmonton during season 1795–96 (pp. xxxii, xxxvii), was in the service of the North West Company by the end of 1796 (p. 76, n. 1). On 31 May 1802 William Tomison remarked in his Cumberland House journal, 'James King that robbed your Honours Servants of 30 Beaver a few years Back at Edmonton House, was shot in the winter by a Clerk of the new Company's, for the like offence and only survived a few Hours after . . .'. B.49/a/31. In his 'Autobiographical Notes' (printed in L. R. Masson, editor, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1890), II, 23) John McDonald of Garth, writing in his old age, described 'a Mr King, an old South Trader in his prime and pride as the first among bullies' and also as having been his XY Company [*sic*] opponent at Fort Augustus during the first season of its existence (which he inaccurately dated 1798–99 instead of 1795–96). This same Mr King was, according to McDonald's account (pp. 25–6), shot by the 'new Company' [XY Company] clerk, La Mothe, near 'Fort de l'Isle' in the winter, 1802. King had been warned of La Mothe by Henry Hallett, the Hudson's Bay Company's clerk at Island House.

⁵ Pembina River.


with all the Bungee and Ottaway Indians, and took them all to Red Deers Lake¹ where they mean to winter as far as I understand by Mr King who passed here this morning from that quarter and is gone down to the house they are building which is near the Turtle Creek² on the south side of the Turtle Creek on the south side of the river³ where he remains till the fall.

We have had a very quiet summer so far, not an Indian nigh us but our hunter and one more. The Indians that was here when the craft left this place are gone down to where the French is building and seven more tents of Edmonton House Indians passed by this place on the south side of the river and going below to thieve horses from the Indians of the Touchwood Mountain⁴ and is to return back in the fall, so I suppose you will see something of them on your road.

As there is no Indian to be got here to pilot us to the Red Deers Lake will oblige me to send Alex Flett to Edmonton House and get their hunter for a pilot as he is perfectly acquainted with the road.⁵

Mr. Durett, the little Company's master,⁶ passed here the 1st June and I think by what he said he is not going to build higher up the river till the fall.

As there is nothing more particular to relate to you I will remain with wishing an early sight of you. Your obedient Humble Servant,
John Peter Pruden.

August  Thursday. A fresh breeze SE clear weather. Ordered the steersmen appointed by Mr Tomison to go to Beaver River to get themselves and canoes in readiness to embark as soon as possible, but the greater part of them declare that they are absolutely determined not to go whatever may be the consequence; the others tell us that they will comply

¹ Lac la Biche.

² The Turtlelake River flows south into the North Saskatchewan River in Section 8, Township 46, Range 18, West of the Third Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 84.

³ Alexander Henry the younger travelling up the Saskatchewan River in 1808 mentioned passing 'opposite old Turtle fort, which stands in a low bottom on the S.', and next crossing 'Turtle creek, which comes in from the north'. According to Coues (*op. cit.*, II, 501, n. 63), 'old Turtle fort' was situated about a mile below the mouth of Turtle[lake] River and on the south side of the Saskatchewan. The Hudson's Bay Company also built a post named Somerset House near Turtlelake River in 1799. There were also two 'small oppositions' there in season 1799-1800. See p. 195, n. 4; p. 204; p. 207, n. 3.

⁴ Touchwood Hills, south of Big Quill Lake, Saskatchewan.

⁵ If this guide was for the party which was to travel from Buckingham House so as to reach Lac la Biche in advance of Peter Fidler, Flett was apparently unable to obtain his services. See pp. 202, 206.

⁶ Of the Forsyth, Richardson and Leith, Jamieson part of what eventually became the New North West or XY Company.

with our orders if we give them additional wages but not otherwise. We have explained to them the punishment they must necessarily expect from so absolute a denial of their duty and such a flagrant breach of contract; but this last they tell us is a mere matter of form and can have no effect further since they have already drawn their wages out of the Honourable Company's hands. 7

It therefore only remains for your Honours to make such an example of them as will ensure obedience from all the rest on this establishment for the future: for should these escape with impunity the little subordination that has been (but very lately) happily established will be entirely subverted, and it will consequently be utterly impossible to carry on your Honours' concerns in this parts with any degree of vigour.

August 2, Friday. A light breeze SW part clear part cloudy weather. Employed packing up an assortment of goods for Beaver River etc.

August 3, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Employed settling men for three canoes etc. for to go to Beaver River: these are all we are capable of fitting out, the principal part of the men obstinately refusing to go nor could we even have got men for three had not Mr Isham, sensible of the difficulties we laboured under, voluntarily offered his services to steer one of the canoes.

August 4, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Getting everything ready for embarking tomorrow.

August 5, Monday. A fresh breeze NW clear sultry weather. At 9 a.m. Messrs Fidler and Isham with ten men and an Indian pilot embarked in three canoes, carrying thirty pieces of trading goods for to make a settlement in Beaver River,¹ and at 10 I embarked with two boats and three canoes. Left John Irvin, Benjamin Bruce and Magnus Tate² (who not only obstinately refuse going to Beaver River themselves but have made use of every artifice in their powers to prevent others) at Cumberland House with orders to go down to York. Rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped.

August 6, Tuesday. Light airs westerly clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped. Copy of a letter left at Cumberland House to be sent to Mr William Tomison and Council, York Fort.

¹ B.104/a/1, 'Journal from Cumberland House to Red Deer's Lake by way of Isle a la Crosse, up Beaver River; also Astronomical and Meteorological Observations made at Greenwich House, Red Deers Lake, with a Journal of a Journey from that House to the Entrance of the Slave Indian River &c &c By Peter Fidler 1799 & 1800'. In the opening entry on 5 August 1799 Fidler said that he left Cumberland House 'to make a Settlement at the Green Lake up the Beaver river'. See p. 206, n. 1; p. 228, n. 1.

² Magnus Tate, steersman, at £25 per annum. He came from Orphir, Mainland, Orkney Islands, and was about 30 years of age in 1799. He joined the Company in 1786. A.30/9, fo. 40.

Cumberland House, August 5th 1799.

Gentlemen, After a pleasant passage Messrs Bird, House and Isham arrived here the 30th ultimo.

Soon after their arrival we gave orders to the men appointed by Mr Tomison to accompany Mr Fidler to get themselves and canoes in readiness to go to Beaver River; the greater part of them absolutely refused let the consequences be what it might. Those who have principally distinguished themselves on this occasion are the following, John Irvin, Benjamin Bruce and Magnus Tate, whom we have sent down to the factory as deserving in our opinion the most exemplary punishment, the two former more especially as they have not only denied duty themselves but have practised every artifice to seduce others to follow their example. There are two others that are alike guilty vizt. Alexander Gun¹ and George Goutcher, but as their influence with the men has not been so great and from other prudential motives we have thought proper to detain them; nevertheless we have no doubt that you will acquiesce with us in considering them as highly meriting punishment as severe as a heavy fine can inflict.

With our utmost exertions we are unable to man more than three canoes nor should we have accomplished this, had not Mr Isham who perceived the difficulties we were labouring under stepped forward and voluntarily offered his services in steering a canoe to Beaver River and afterwards to come across land to Buckingham House.²

You will naturally conceive from what has happened that our situation has been extremely unpleasant and that it has proved to us a source of the greatest disappointment and vexation. We have made use of every effect in our power to recall the men to a sense of their duty; we have remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their behaviour; we have conceded everything that could with propriety be attended to; and we have moreover given them our strongest assurances that such a representation should be made to the Honourable Committee of the more laborious duty they had to undergo as would doubtless procure them a suitable advance of wages. On the other hand we have stated them the consequences that must inevitably ensue (dismissal from the service and forfeiture of wages) if they should still persist in their denial of duty; but our endeavours have been utterly ineffectual and it now only remains to take such steps as may most effectually serve to eradicate that

¹ Alexander Gun, bowsman, at £16 per annum. He came from 'Ronaldsha' (?South Ronaldsay), Orkney Islands, and joined the Company in 1790 when he was about 22 years of age. A.30/10, fo. 31. He was fined by the Governor and Committee for his part in the affair. See p. 204, n. 2.

² See p. 212, n. 3.

mutinous disposition which has indeed several times manifested itself in a smaller degree but has now broken loose with such unexampled violence.

In the present situation of the Honourable Company's affairs and under the existing circumstances in particular, we are fully persuaded you will concur in opinion with us that this is a most important crisis; it were superfluous in us to say that it demands no inconsiderable share of attention. We are confident you feel too much interested in the prosperity of the Honourable Company's concerns not to bestow on it that mature deliberation so eventful an affair absolutely requires. You cannot fail to recollect that every servant on this establishment of whatever description he be anxiously awaits the issue.

Positive orders have been given to these men and they have as positively refused to obey; your conduct on this occasion will either ensure the obedience of servants with all its beneficial consequences or convince them that they may with impunity contemn the orders of their superiors and thus be not only an insuperable obstacle to further improvement in the management of the Honourable Company's affairs but a foundation of irretrievable mischief.

Now will be indisputably decided this simple, yet as it seems undetermined question, which of the two is esteemed the more probable method of advancing the interest of our Honourable Employers: whether to carry into execution a plan suggested by an experienced and vigilant officer undertaken by one not less active and enterprising aided by the prompt obedience of his men; or whether it be an implicit submission to the will of the servants and supinely to adapt or relinquish such schemes as they may think proper to approve or reject. Now will all know whether for the future the servant is to comply with the orders of his master or the master to act under the immediate direction and control of his servant.

We cannot but feel a little concerned for the men who have displayed so unusual a degree of obstinacy on this occasion who have rejected our proffered indulgences and acted so directly in opposition to our repeated admonitions, yet nevertheless we hope that they will not through an ill-timed lenity have further reason to believe what they now confidently assert, that their contracts are void and of no effect; but losing sight of the individual and keeping a steady eye on the interest of our Honourable Employers, we are persuaded you will take such measures as shall for the future support the officer in his authority and preserve such a degree of subordination as shall avert

the ruinous and oftentimes irremediable consequences attending a state of general disobedience.

We must not omit to recommend to your notice Joseph Lewis¹ for his very laudable behaviour on this occasion, he having from the beginning expressed his readiness to go wherever he should be sent, notwithstanding he thereby exposed himself to the resentment of the rest of his fellow servants who it seems had formed a combination in the most determined manner to oppose any orders that might be issued for the expedition to Beaver River; and we beg leave to express our hope that the Honourable Committee will reward him for his very singular and meritorious conduct.²

In compliance with the wishes of Mr Tomison's, we have endeavoured to prevail on Mr Richards³ to return into the Honourable Company's service and have succeeded: we agree to allow him thirty

¹ Joseph Lewis (Lewes) alias Levy Johnson, who came from Manchester, New England, was born about 1772. George Sutherland described him as a mulatto, but others as a 'Canadian of Colour', and as 'black but whither . . . slave or a hired servant I do not know'. He spoke 'tolerable good English'. Lewis was taken to Basquia by François Beaubien of 'one of the new Canadian Companies' operating on the Saskatchewan in 1795. Lewis left 'his Master' that year after a disagreement and being, as he said, under no contract, offered his services to the Hudson's Bay Company. He entered into his first contract at York Factory in July 1796, agreeing to serve as a steersman at £20 per annum. He had the reputation of being a good steersman and 'a sober steady man'. During season 1796-97 Lewis was stationed at Burntwood Lake, and then apparently joined Charles Isham at Colen's Cot (Jack River). He went with Peter Fidler in 1799 not only to Meadow Lake where Bolsover House was built, but also to Greenwich House, Lac la Biche. It is also extremely likely that he was one of Fidler's companions on the surveying journey he made to Lesser Slave River in the early weeks of 1800. Lewis was with Henry Hallett at Island House early in 1801 and possibly remained on the North Saskatchewan until he went with Joseph Howse to Chesterfield House in 1804-5. During 1810-11 he accompanied Howse on his expedition across the Rockies. The party wintered near Kalispell, Montana. Lewis remained in the Company's Saskatchewan District as a 'freeman' after he retired in 1814, and was killed by Blackfoot Indians in 1820. As he was a widower at the time of his death the Letters of Administration regarding his estate could not be granted by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury until his son came of age in 1826. Lewis was also survived by two 'natural and lawful' daughters. H.B.C. Archives Dept. file.

² He was allowed 'a present for good behaviour of £5 5s.'. A.30/10, fo. 34. Elsewhere (A.6/16, p. 225) the amount was given as £5.

³ John Richards was of Welsh and Indian blood and appears to have been born at Henley House where his father, William Richards, was surgeon and master from 1765-69. After making several applications to be employed as an 'Englishman', John was eventually accepted by the Company in the capacity of labourer in 1783. He was 'beloved by the Indians' and became a good interpreter, though his conduct was at times inclined to be irregular. He visited Wales in the winter of 1795-96 and then returned to Albany Factory. Following a disagreement with Donald ('Mad') McKay, the Canadian trader who joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1791 (see p. 133, n. 2), John Richards deserted when near Osnaburgh House on 16 June 1797 and went away with a party of Indians. According to John Best at Osnaburgh House, his departure was not unexpected because he could not keep away from Indians and was more turbulent than any of them. Richards joined the North West Company and was apparently identical with the 'one Richards a Canadn.' who was in charge at the Side Pine during 1797-98. See p. 123 and n. 1, pp. 207, 216. John Richards was the father of William Richards whose water-colour sketches of forts in James Bay are in the Hudson's Bay Company's collection. See Alice M. Johnson, 'James Bay Artist William Richards' in *The Beaver* (Winnipeg, Hudson's Bay Company), Summer 1967, pp. 4-10.

pounds for this year as an interpreter and to go to Indians occasionally for which he is every way fully qualified. He hopes the Honourable Company will allow him £40 per annum for three years to commence from 1800. If the six canoes had gone to Beaver River we intended that he should accompany Mr Fidler to the Red Deers Lake and we have still hopes of being able to send him across with goods etc. by land from Buckingham House.

We have received a letter from Mr Pruden dated the 22nd of June 1799¹ in which he informs us that they were then all very well and that they had then seen no Indians since the boats left that place in the spring. He also informs us that the Canadians are gone to build two houses near thirty days above Edmonton House, one by the river at the foot of the stoney mountain and the other to the northward at a place called the Wolfes Track. He had not been able to get a guide to go across to the Red Deers Lake but intended to send for the hunter from Edmonton House who says is a very good one. Wishing you an early ship-time. We remain, Gentlemen, your obedient humble servants, Signed, J. Bird P. Fidler. J. Howse.²

The copy of a letter sent to Mr William Sinclair.

Edmonton House,³ August 6th 1799.

Sir, The bearers are three men⁴ who were appointed by Mr Tomison and accordingly ordered by me to go to Beaver River but absolutely refuse to go. You will therefore please to send them on to the factory and forward the letters etc. to Mr Tomison. I remain Sir your humble servant, James Bird.

August 7, Wednesday. A fresh breeze westerly clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped. Passed a tent of Bungee Indians from whom we traded a little meat etc.

August 8, Thursday. Light breezes variable part clear part cloudy weather with showers of rain. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed and tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped. Passed a tent of Cumberland House Indians, traded a little dried meat etc. from them.

August 9, Friday. Light breezes westerly clear hot weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped.

¹ The copy entered under 31 July (p. 195) is dated 17 June 1799.

² The copy of this letter in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fos. 13-15, has the following postscript: 'since writing the above another Gentn. has arrived here who wishes to express his entire approval of the contents of this Letter. J.H. Heny. Hallet'.

³ Should be Cumberland House.

⁴ John Irvine 1st, Benjamin Bruce and Magnus Tate. See p. 197.

August 10, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped a little above the Nippowin.

August 11, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped.

August 12, Monday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 4 p.m. when we arrived at Carleton House and had the satisfaction to find James Sandison and men all well.

August 13, Tuesday. A fresh gale NW, a.m. cloudy weather with rain, p.m. clear. Left a few pieces of goods, exchanged some men who were unwell, and at 11 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped.

August 14, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped a little below the Carp River.¹

August 15, Thursday. Early a thick fog afterwards light airs easterly. Clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked and rowed till half past 7 p.m. then encamped near Setting River House.²

August 16, Friday. A fresh breeze easterly clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, rowed, sailed and tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped a little way above Hudsons House. Met two Canadians from the upper settlements on their way to Carleton House who delivered us the following letter from Mr Pruden. The copy of a letter received from Mr Pruden.

Buckingham House, August 10th 1799.

Sir, A Canadian they name the little Wolf that is going down to meet the canoes gives me an opportunity of informing you how affairs is going on in this quarter. Alexander Flett has been on discovery to the Red Deers Lake from Edmonton House but has returned without success, the bogs and woods being so bad that he was obliged to return short.³ The N.W. Company's men that was sent to build a house at the Stonney Mountain returned in the first part of the summer; they were sent off again with strict orders to build and a few days ago they all came back bag and baggage. The reason of this I cannot properly tell but they seem to say that the Southerd Indians is against it and that there is no provisions to be got there but they are determined to build there when their canoes arrive. There has been but a few Swampy Ground Stone Indians, and the Little Old Man with his family and the Big Bastard that is tenting with him, in here since the craft left this in the spring.

¹ Jackfish River, flowing north into Jackfish Lake. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan*, p. 40. Fidler referred to it (1792) as Jack River. E.3/1, fo. 93d.

² This post does not appear to have been occupied during 1799-1800.

³ See p. 196.

None of the blackguards that used to visit this house every summer has been seen yet and now we don't expect them as the time of the year is past.

We have all passed a very good summer here getting plenty to eat and no Indians to molest us in the least.

Having nothing more particular to acquaint you of, I remain with wishing an early sight of you. Your obedient humble servant,
John Peter Pruden.¹

August 17, Saturday. A fresh breeze SE clear hot weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped. Killed several buffalo.

August 18, Sunday. Light breezes SE clear hot weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped. At 11 a.m. John Irvin, Magnus Tate and Benjamin Bruice (who having absolutely refused to go to Beaver River as ordered, I had left at Cumberland House with orders to return to the Factory) overtook us and delivered me the following letter from Mr Joseph Howse. The copy of a letter received from Mr J. Howse.

Cumberland House, August 9th 1799.

Dear Sir, It will doubtless be a matter of surprise to you to see the bearers of this letter vizt. John Irvin, Benjamin Bruice and Magnus Tate, who were left with me in order to their going to the Factory; but when you understand how I am at present situated I flatter myself you will approve the step I have taken.

Yesterday arrived here two canoes from the Grand Portage which are (as I am informed) part of a large fleet fitted out there this season and are now on their way to this quarter for the first time.² These you will observe are a separate concern from that of last year who likewise will soon make their appearance here.

This then being the case, and the men before alluded to having positively refused to go to the Factory, it appears to me that at any rate they will be more serviceable even up the Siskechewan which is the only place they consent to go to than they can possibly be here, having been put off duty several days in consequence of their

¹ There is also a copy of this letter in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fo. 24-24d.

² The Montreal house of Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy had, before 1797, outfitted traders going to the south shore of Lake Superior from their distribution centre at Michilimackinac. They joined the New North West Company (p. 182, n. 2) in 1800. See R. Harvey Fleming, "The Origin of "Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company" ' in *Canadian Historical Review* (Toronto, 1929), Vol. IX, pp. 142-3.

disobedience; indeed under any circumstances almost, their services can very well be dispensed with at this place. An application on their part to Mr McGillivray¹ to enter into their employ is an occurrence too that has its weight with me, notwithstanding Mr McGillivray's polite compliance with my wishes that he would decline engaging them till the arrival of the rest of the gentlemen of the North West Company.

Having too great reason to think (from the conversation I have had with Mr McGillivray) that their services would be readily accepted, I take this opportunity of sending them off in the interim, by which I propose to myself two essential points vizt. the Honourable Company's reaping the benefit of their services this year, and the next summer the chief and council will be enabled by having them in their custody to send them to England, if such a step should be deemed necessary.²

I have sent by them the few goods that are left here and have ordered them to be as expeditious as possible. Wishing their safe arrival, I remain dear Sir your most obedient servant, Joseph Howse.³

August 19, Monday. a.m. a fresh breeze NE afterwards calm clear weather. At half past 4 p.m. [*sic*] embarked, sailed, rowed and tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped.

August 20, Tuesday. A fresh gale easterly part clear part cloudy weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, sailed and rowed etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped.

August 21, Wednesday. A fresh breeze SW clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, rowed and tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped near Battle River. Passed thirteen tents of Southerd Indians, from whom we traded a little leather, dried provisions and a few beaver skins. They say they intend wintering and hunting beaver (with four more tents of Indians who are near the Canadian House at Turtle River) in and about the Eagle Hill.

August 22, Thursday. a.m. a fresh breeze SE afterwards SW clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, sailed, tracked and rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped at the Canadian House Turtle River.⁴

¹ ?Duncan or John.

² Irvine, Bruce, Tate and Gun were each fined £10 by the council at York, but in 1801 the Governor and Committee reduced the amount to £4 each on the grounds that 'excessive Punishments as well as too lenient ones have their Evils'. A.6/16, p. 225; A.16/34, fos. 38, 67; A.30/10, fos. 31, 33. George Goutcher (p. 198) was later reported by Bird 'as an Object deserving of Leniety' because 'his refusal proceeded from indisposition and a delicacy that prevented the nature of his disorder being known' and was not fined. B.239/b/79, fo. 31.

³ There is also a copy of this letter in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fo. 21d.

⁴ See p. 195 and n. 4.

August 23, Friday. A fresh breeze SW clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked and rowed till 8 p.m. then encamped a little below Manchester House.

August 24, Saturday. Light airs westerly clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, rowed, tracked etc. till 7 p.m. then encamped. Sent one canoe to proceed on as fast as possible to Buckingham House with orders for Mr Pruden to send for horses from Edmonton House as fast as possible to assist in conveying goods to Red Deers Lake etc.

August 25, Sunday. Light airs SE clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped. Killed one cow buffalo.

August 26, Monday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 11 when we were obliged to put ashore and repair a boat. At 4 p.m. set off again and tracked till 7.

August 27, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 5 p.m. then encamped to fetch the meat of a cow buffalo.

August 28, Wednesday. Light breezes variable with heavy showers of rain. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped. At 5 p.m. found Mr Pruden who was come on horseback to meet us.

August 29, Thursday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear weather. At 5 a.m. the canoes and boats embarked and at 6 set off with Mr Pruden on horseback for the house where we arrived at 10.¹ At 5 p.m. the canoes and boats arrived.

August 30, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Employed getting an assortment of goods ready to send to Red Deers Lake.

August 31, Saturday. Light breezes variable clear weather. Some men employed carrying their canoes to a lake² about three miles from the house in order to proceed to Red Deers Lake; sent off one man³ and an Indian for the Green Lake.⁴ The men belonging to the boats getting ready

¹ The Buckingham House journal for 1799-1800 has not survived. Extracts from the MS fragment of David Thompson's 'Journal of Occurrences at Fort George', 1799-1800 are quoted in Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 561n.

² See p. 166, n. 3. The party was being led by three free Canadians. See p. 206. The journey of three miles north-west 'across a fine level open grass plain' took them to what Fidler called 'the Bridge'. Travelling in the opposite direction in 1800 Fidler described 'the Bridge' as 'over the creek built of wood about 200 yards from the lower end of the [Moosehills] Lake which is very grassy & swampy, at the bridge the Canoes are carried up the bank on the S side which is steep & woody & then hauled upon a sling [?] made of 2 long pieces of wood about 4 inches square & turned up at each end a little before & 6 or 8 upright posts at proper distance on each side, a line betwixt each is put across & the Canoe is laid upon them & so conveniently & safely conveyed from one place to another'. E.3/2, fo. 62. See sketch map 'Fidler's Route to Lac La Biche and Athabasca 1799-1800' in J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966).

³ Hugh Gibson and his companion had three horses. They met Fidler near Meadow Lake on 3 September. P. 212; B.104/a/1; E.3/2.

⁴ See p. 213, n. 4.

to embark tomorrow and the rest variously employed. Copy of a letter sent to Mr Fidler.¹

Buckingham House, August 30th 1799.

Dear Sir, After having a pleasant passage we arrived here yesterday and had the pleasure to find Mr Pruden and all with him very well.

The men who so obstinately refused to go to Beaver River were as determined not to return to the Factory, and on being therefore told by Mr Howse that they were no longer on duty or considered as the Company's servants immediately made application to the Canadians² to be admitted into their service. As these would have readily received them Mr Howse very prudently gave them a canoe and cargo and sent them after us. They now consent to go across from this place to the Red Deers Lake with canoes and goods. The quantity they will be able to take with the assistance of horses will I hope be sufficient to serve, at least till more can be conveyed to you in winter. It is therefore necessary for you to leave some person at the Green Lake till Mr Pruden can be sent to that place and set off as quick as possible to meet these people where they will fall into the Beaver River. Three free Canadians who arrived here from Red Deers Lake (with fifteen³ packs of beaver which they have left here and which they wish to sell for cash or a bill on the Honourable Company)⁴ have undertaken to conduct our men⁵ by water to that place. I remain Sir Yours etc., J. Bird.

September 1, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

September 2, Monday. A fresh breeze NW part clear part cloudy weather. Nine men with horses carrying their things and canoes to a lake about eight miles from the House,⁶ fifteen embarked in two boats for Edmonton

¹ There is also a copy of this letter in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fos. 24d.-25. Fidler's version, received on 3 September, is in his journal B.104/a/1, fo. 33d. (see p. 197, n. 1) which was sent to London. But he did not copy this letter or any others into E.3/2 which includes (fos. 46-56) his 'Journal from the Mouth of the Beaver river up it towards the Green Lake, Bolsover House, and Greenwich House at the Red Deers Lake in 1799', 24 August to 26 September 1799, revised and rewritten at a later date. See p. xxix.

² 'Mr McGillivray of the N West Company' in Peter Fidler's copy in B.104/a/1, fo. 33d.

³ Fourteen, in Fidler's copy.

⁴ There is no record in the Bills Payable Books (A.21/4, fos. 19d.-24) or in the York Factory lists of 'Bills 1800' and 'Bills 1801' (B.239/d/120, fos. 39d.-42 and B.239/d/123, fos. 56-58) to show that the Canadians were accommodated in this way.

⁵ Fidler's copy of Bird's letter in B.104/a/1, fo. 33d., reads 'conduct our men. Mr Pruden has endeavoured but without success to find a road practicable for Horses straight from this place [?Buckingham House] to Red Deers Lake'. See p. 202 where Pruden states that Alexander Flett made an abortive journey from Edmonton House.

⁶ Present-day Kehiwin Lake, described by Fidler in May 1800 (E.3/2, fo. 61) as 'a narrow kind of

House, and the rest variously employed. An Indian and one man with a boy arrived from Edmonton House with horses.

September 3, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent off four men, with eleven horses accompanied by Mr Richards,¹ loaded with twenty-six pieces of goods etc. which they are to carry to the Moose Lake,² from where the canoes can convey it to Red Deers Lake. The men who went away yesterday arrived for the remainder of their things. Sent off one man in a small canoe to meet Mr Hallett with the following letter. The copy of a letter sent to Mr Hallett.

Buckingham House, September 3rd 1799.

Sir, As there are a great number of Southerd Indians, many of them our traders and best hunters, who intend wintering near the Turtle River it will be necessary for you to remain there with men and a proper assortment of goods and build a house.³

By the bearer (James Ross)⁴ I have sent down what stores I imagine you will be in want of that can be spared from this place and will send you horses etc. directly they return from Moose Lake. Keep what men and goods you may think necessary and send the rest up with the boats if possible as it will be inconvenient to have them repaired there. Sir, Yours etc., James Bird.

September 4, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Early a.m. nine men set off to proceed with the canoes and their own things to Moose Lake there to receive their cargoes and embark for Beaver River, where they will meet Mr Fidler and then proceed on for Red Deers Lake. Sent Mr Pruden on horseback to accompany them as far as Moose Lake and there deliver them their cargoes etc. At 11 four men arrived from

Swampy Lake about 300 yards wide, at the upper end of it the Horses last fall carried the goods over Land from Buckingham House & was embarked in the Canoes . . .

¹ See p. 200, n. 3, and p. 216.

² For a reproduction from E.3/2, fo. 61, of Peter Fidler's sketch of Moose Lake (on which he marked the site of 'the French house built by Mr Angus Shaw in 1790 & remained here 3 years before it was left'), see MacGregor, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

³ See p. 196, notes 2 and 3. Henry Hallett arrived at Buckingham House from below on 6 September 1799, and at Edmonton House two days later. He set out on his return to Buckingham House on the 10th, arrived there on the following day, and on the 15th went downstream to build at Turtle[lake] River. P. 195, n. 4; pp. 208-9; Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), II, 506, n. 71, 561n. Hallett's 'Somerset House, Turtle Creek, America' journal opens with the entry for 20 September 1799 in which he said he was accompanied by nine men. His 'shed' was 16 x 13 feet and his dwelling house 40 x 22 feet. B.204/a/1.

⁴ James Ross from 'Burra' (? Burra Island), Orkney Islands, was listed during season 1799-1800 as a bowsman at £6 per annum plus £2 for inland duty. On Tomison reporting him of good character his next contract, which began in 1800, was at £14 per annum. He first joined the Company in 1795 when he was about 20 years of age. A.30/7, fos. 36, 80; A.30/10, fo. 35.

Edmonton House with horses, and at 1 p.m. embarked with four men in one canoe for Edmonton House. I have desired Mr Pruden to set off for the Green Lake¹ directly after he shall hear from Mr Fidler or the Indian returns from Green Lake, and leave Alexander Flett in charge of Buckingham House.

September 5, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped. Passed two tents of Canadians.

September 6, Friday. A fresh breeze southerly clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped.

September 7, Saturday. A fresh breeze westerly clear weather. At 5 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped. Met a man who was sent from Buckingham House to inform us that Mr McDonald² of N.W. Co. had arrived there the 5th instant and that he intends going to build near the Rocky Mountain.

September 8, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 5 a.m. embarked and at 10 arrived at Edmonton House. Found James Gaddy and the men with him all very well; found here a small quantity of provisions and about 200 made beaver in furs. The boats had arrived about two hours before us. At 2 p.m. Mr Hallet and Alexander Flett arrived from Buckingham House, Mr Hallett left two boats on their way to Buckingham House near Manchester House from whence he came to this place on horseback.

September 9, Monday. Wind and weather as before. The copy of a letter received from Mr Tomison. Oxford House July 23rd 1799.

[See above p. 188.]

September 10, Tuesday. A fresh breeze easterly cloudy weather. Employed making preparations for proceeding towards the Stonney mountain etc. etc. At 2 p.m. Mr Hallett and Alexander Flett embarked in a small canoe with a few articles of trading goods etc. for Buckingham House from whence Mr Hallett is to proceed with a boat and an assortment of goods to the Turtle River and there settle a house.

September 11, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NW Cloudy weather. Sent off three men with horses (belonging to the men who are to winter at

¹ Owing to Fidler's change of plan (p. 213, n. 4) Pruden went instead to winter at Bolsover House. See p. 212, n. 2.

² John McDonald of Garth and David Thompson arrived at Fort George, the North West Company's post, on 5 September to find it 'without doors or windows, and otherwise dilapidated'. On the 6th John McDonald, Cardinal, La Liberté, La Rémé and others started on horseback for Fort Augustus, leaving Thompson with two men and twenty pieces of goods to wait for Daniel McKenzie. He arrived at Fort George from Turtlelake River with [James] King on 22 September. McKenzie and King left for Fort Augustus on 25 September. Thompson was at Fort George during the winter of 1799-1800. Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 561n.

Turtle River) for Buckingham House; four to fetch horses; sixteen getting ready to go off in one boat and a canoe to build near the Stoney Mountain and the rest variously employed. Some Southerd Indians arrived. Two Muddy River Indians also arrived for tobacco.

September 12, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent off four men in a canoe to accompany the Canadians to where they are going to build near the Stonney Mountain, nine getting ready to embark in a boat tomorrow, and the rest variously employed. The Muddy River Indians went away and some Stone Indians arrived; traded and went away.

September 13, Friday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather. At 8 a.m. nine men embarked in a boat loaded with thirty pieces of trading goods to proceed up the river to where the Canadians intend building near the Stoney Mountain.

September 14, Saturday. A fresh breeze westerly cloudy weather. At 3 p.m. set off with three men, three Indian hunters and horses, in company with the Canadians towards the Stoney Mountain. Rode till 8 p.m. then encamped. The very bad accounts we have received of the country we are going to settle has induced me to ~~take such a number of~~ hunters. Some Canadians who went up to build last summer after remaining there near a month were reduced to the necessity of returning to this place for want of provisions;¹ and the Indians give us equally alarming accounts telling us that it will be impossible for us to subsist.

September 15, Sunday. A fresh gale NW with showers of rain. At 7 a.m. we set off and at 2 p.m. encamped at side of a small river after having come about twenty miles. Some Muddy River Indians in company.

September 16, Monday. A fresh gale weather as yesterday. At 7 a.m. set off, rode till 1 p.m. then encamped on a branch of the Fighting River.² Passed six tents of Southerd Indians.

September 17, Tuesday. A fresh breeze westerly part clear part cloudy weather. At 7 a.m. set off and at 2 p.m. encamped on the banks of the Fighting River. The Muddy River Indians went on.

September 18, Wednesday. A strong gale NW with heavy showers of snow. The banks of the Red Deer River³ in view. At 7 a.m. we set off and at ten encamped. Sent the Indians on hunting and they killed us a female

¹ See pp. 195, 202.

² Pipestone Creek. For the younger Alexander Henry's account of this route which he covered in September 1810, see Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 632-42. See also 'Map . . . of Northern Alberta . . . by J. B. Tyrrell, B.A., F.G.S., 1887' (including waggon, cart and pack trails) to accompany his 'Report on a Part of Northern Alberta . . .' in *Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada, Annual Report 1886* (New Series), Vol. II, 1886 (Ottawa, 1887).

³ Presumably at some point NNE of the city of Red Deer, Alberta. The Red Deer River flows east into the South Saskatchewan River in Township 22, Range 29, West of the Third Meridian. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 69.

wood buffalo. In the evening three tents of Muddy River Indians arrived on their way to Edmonton House, but they now intend to accompany us up to where we build and to wait the arrival of the canoes and return from thence to their tents.

September 19, Thursday. Light airs northerly clear weather. At 7 a.m. we set off, rode till 2 p.m. then encamped at the side of a small river called the Wolfs River.¹ The Muddy River Indians encamped with us.

September 20, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 7 a.m. we set off and at ten the snowy summits of the Stony Mountain like vast heaps of white clouds appeared in view presenting to our sight (as the sun shone full on it) the most grand and romantic views.² Rode on till twelve then encamped with ten tents of Blood and Sussew Indians. The Muddy River Indians in company.

September 21, Saturday. Light airs westerly cloudy weather with small showers of rain. At 7 a.m. we set off, rode on till 3 p.m. then encamped. Our hunters brought us part of the meat of two wood buffalo.

September 22, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Remained here all day to rest the horses. Our hunters went a hunting but returned in the evening without success.

September 23, Monday. A light breeze westerly clear weather. At 7 a.m. we set off and at 11 encamped on the banks of a branch of the Saskatchewan River.³

September 24, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 7 a.m. we set off and at nine arrived at the side of the Saskatchewan River; rode across⁴ and encamped near the place where we intend building; the Muddy River Indians tenting with us. Our hunters killed a moose deer and a cow buffalo.

September 25, Wednesday. A light breeze clear warm weather by day, but amazing cold nights which we attribute to the vicinity of the mountain that appears quite near us though by the Indians' account is at least thirty or forty miles distance; from what little we have yet seen of this part of the

¹ Blindman River. See *Place-Names of Alberta* (Ottawa, Geographic Board of Canada, 1928), p. 21.

² The route being used by the North Westers and James Bird was substantially the same, if not the same, as that followed and recorded by David Thompson in 1800 and Alexander Henry the younger in 1810. The place from which they first sighted the Rocky Mountains was the 'small plain with open country ahead' (Henry) called 'Pikenow', i.e. Piegan (Thompson), which they reached after crossing the Medicine Lodge Hills, north-west of Sylvan Lake, Alberta (latitude 52° 28', longitude 114° 17'). Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 633-42; *Gazetteer of Canada, Alberta* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1958), p. 57.

³ Clearwater River.

⁴ To the left bank of the Saskatchewan, not far above the mouth of the Clearwater River. The North West Company's post was known as Rocky Mountain House and the Hudson's Bay Company's neighbouring one as Acton House. See p. lxxii. Gilbert Laughton was in charge at Acton House during season 1799-1800.

country it is far from appearing so bad as represented to us, though very different from the agreeable plains below here; now nothing can be seen but the gloomy tops of pines till the Rocky Mountain (whose icy summits seem to pierce the sky) intercepts the view.

September 26, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as yesterday. At 4 p.m. four Canadian canoes arrived and brought me a letter from our men in the canoe I had sent to accompany the Canadians, in which they inform me that they were no longer able to accompany the Canadians or to come much further at any rate without assistance, that one of their number is entirely lame, that their tracking line breaks so frequently as to endanger their lives and the canoes' cargo; that the river ever since the 16th instant has been one continued rapid almost without intermission, and that it is their opinion that the boat will not be able to get even so far as they then were. The Canadians give us much the same account and it is further corroborated by the appearance of the river here. I may consequently almost venture to conclude that it will be impossible to navigate this part of the river to any advantage at this season of the year with boats,¹ or at least large boats so far up as this, and it may become necessary to go further hereafter; for should the Canadians fail in bringing in the Cotta na hao Indians² to this place, they will remove still further up, into the Stoney Mountain if necessary, which is an enterprise that can be undertaken during the high water in summer only; nor then without canoes and able men. Beaver are said to be numerous in the country of the Cotta na ha's, and nothing will prevent the Canadians getting part of them; the hopes of immediate gain is a strong encouragement to them; they have every requisite for undertakings of this kind, plenty of goods, canoes, and able men ready to second all their enterprises however dangerous or laborious. Sent one man and an Indian on horseback down the river to meet our people with a line to assist them on, the rest of the men employed as before. Our hunters brought some part of a red deer.

September 27, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

September 28, Saturday. A light breeze NW cloudy weather. Men employed as before. One man arrived from the boat and canoe, he says he left them this morning and supposes that they will arrive tomorrow.

September 29, Sunday. A fresh breeze NE cold weather with rain.

September 30, Monday. A light breeze NE clear weather. At 10 a.m. the four men in the canoe arrived and at 12 the boat arrived also all safe; they all agree in representing the river very bad and almost impossible to be

¹ See pp. 194, 214.

² See p. lxxxii, and notes 2 and 3; p. 112.

navigated so far as this with heavy boats, and that it is with the utmost difficulty they have now arrived after eighteen days of most laborious work.

October 1, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men who arrived yesterday resting themselves, the rest variously employed.

October 2, Wednesday. A fresh breeze northerly. Cold weather. Three men employed sawing and the rest felling wood for building.

October 3, Thursday. A fresh breeze northerly. Cold weather with snow. Men employed as yesterday. Three Muddy River Indians arrived with a few beaver and two or three beaver skins.

October 4, Friday. A fresh breeze northerly. Cloudy cold weather. Men employed as before, all the Muddy River Indians went away. Made the Muddy River Indian Chief some small presents and promised him larger in case he can succeed in bringing the Cottanaho Indians to this place with beaver; he promised to do everything in his power but whether he will succeed or not time only can determine. Two Indian young men arrived from Edmonton House with letters from Messrs Fidler, Hallett, Pruden, Gaddy and Flett, by which I am informed that the Canadians¹ are building a house between this and Edmonton House and that there is some reason to apprehend their building between Edmonton and Buckingham Houses, which is opposite where the principal part of the Southerd Indians intend wintering. The copy of a letter from Mr Fidler.

Bolsover House,² 8th September 1799.

Dear Sir, By the arrival of Hugh Gibson³ and the Indian man on the 3rd instant I received your agreeable favour and was happy to hear that you found all well up the Saskatchewan River.

We arrived here the 3rd instant and ever since we have been very badly off for provisions, never having more than one duck per man a day. Shall set off to the Red Deers Lake this day (leaving Hugh Sabeston in charge until Mr Pruden arrives) with three men⁴ in a

¹ The North West Company. See p. 214, n. 4.

² The post which Fidler's men were building near the north-west end of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. The site, on the only spot near wood fit for building purposes, was on the west side of Meadow River, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from its entry into Meadow Lake and 1120 yards 'across a fine plain'. Fidler admitted that the 'worst inconvenience is the great distance to fetch water'. E.3/2, fo. 49d.; B.104/a/1, 5 September 1799. John Peter Pruden arrived there from Buckingham House to take charge on 22 September 1799 and found 'Hugh Sabbeston and seven Men Building a House'. A store 12 feet square had already been built. E.3/2, fo. 49d.; B.20/a/1.

³ See p. 205, n. 3. Hugh Gibson was accompanied by Charles Isham (p. 197) on his return to Buckingham House. B.104/a/1 and E.3/2, fo. 50d. According to David Thompson, Isham arrived at Buckingham House on 11 September. Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 561n.

⁴ William Flett, Joseph Lewis and John Ballenden (? 1, 2 or 3, see p. 165, n. 2) accompanied Fidler. E.3/2, fo. 50d.

canoe without a day's allowance of meat and without a pilot, as we could not by any means engage one to conduct us there, all the Indians in this quarter being frightened of the Bungees, so that we shall have both to hunt and grope our way there.

Shot, orris lace and hatchets are much wanted here, of the former there is only one bag and the latter not one that the Indians will take, they are all too small for cutting open the beaver houses with.

The pilot that was engaged to conduct us to this place knew not any part of the road from Cumberland until we arrived into Isle a la Crosse Lake.¹ Mr Auld² and Linklater³ winters there and lower down in this river with three boats and one canoe.⁴

Our returns from this quarter I doubt will not be great this year as we are entire strangers and all the Indians being so accustomed to the Canadians. Wishing you every happiness and a good trade, I remain Dear sir your humble servant, P. Fidler.⁵

¹ The Indian pilot 'White Boy' soon had to confess that he could be of no use on the track as far as Ile-à-la-Crosse, 'by much the most difficult of the whole way', because he had been only very young when last on it. Fidler found his way from Cumberland House to Ile-à-la-Crosse by 'an old Journal & a Map' (B.104/a/1, fo. 2) which he made when he 'went from the Athapescow in 1792' (E.3/2, fo. 46). See J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 327-491 (Philip Turnor's Journal, 1790-92), and p. 495 (Peter Fidler's Journal, 1791-92).

² William Auld of Edinburgh who first joined the Company as a surgeon in 1790 when he was 20 years of age. In season 1799-1800 he was listed as 'Second' to Thomas Stayner, Chief at Churchill Factory, at a salary of £80 per annum. A.30/10, fo. 42. For a biography, see *H.B.R.S.*, II, 203-5.

³ See p. 269, notes 1-3.

⁴ William Auld started from Churchill on 26 June 1799 to build at Green Lake in opposition to the Canadians. He was joined at Indian Lake House by William Linklater and on 6 August reached Rapid River where he found William Flew, writer, and two men taking care of goods left there in readiness in the preceding spring. Their guide being useless Auld had to find the route with the aid of a copy of Philip Turnor's chart (see n. 1 above). His party was overtaken by Peter Fidler's in Primeau Lake on 20 August. Auld remarked that Tomison must have known of the intentions of the Churchill people before Fidler's party had started, so Fidler became 'under the necessity to go farther & build as the Canoes are much more handy than Boats in going any where with'. He accordingly went to the 'Barren Ground Lake' because his pilot 'White Boy' said it was the best place at which to get furs and provisions, and there built Bolsover House. Pp. lxviii-ix; p. 197, n. 1; p. 212, n. 2; p. 217; B.84/a/1; B.104/a/1; E.3/2, fo. 46 *et seq.*

⁵ The copy of this letter in the York Factory correspondence book (B.239/b/63, fo. 25d.) is the same as Bird's, but Fidler's version in B.104/a/1, fo. 34, is dated 7 September and reads as follows: 'By the arrival of Hugh Gibson & an Indian Man the 3rd Inst. I received your favour dated 31st August and was happy to hear you found all well in that quarter which blessing thank God we enjoy here, but are very badly off for Provisions, having finished our small stock the 1st Inst. and since we have seldom have had more than one Duck p. man a day. I shall set off Tomorrow for Red Deers Lake with one Canoe & 3 Men, we have not more than 1 Days provisions with us & the Indians tells us that it will take us 12 or 14 Days so that we shall be under the necessity of hunting our way and finding the road too as not an Indian will engage to accompany us as pilot. The Pilot that was engaged to guide us from Cumberland House to Beaver River did not know an Inch of the road until we entered Isle a la Crosse Lake so that we was under the necessity of finding it out by ourselves by a Map & Journal. All the Articles of Trading Goods, & Twine that will be wanted at Red Deers Lake would wish you to send as soon as possible as also Hatchets, Orrice Lace & Shot to this place, as there is only one bag of the latter here, and not a hatchet that an Indian will take, they are all too small for cutting open the Beaver Houses with. Wishing you health & a Good Trade'.

October 5, Saturday. Light airs northerly clear cold weather, ice driving in the river. Employed getting ready to return to Edmonton House as my presence seems to be no longer necessary here. The amazing bad accounts we had received of this place both from Indians and Canadians occasioned my coming up in case any difficulties should have taken place. Men employed as before.

October 6, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent one man and three Indians (who arrived on Friday) with horses by land and at 11 a.m. embarked with three men and an Indian in a canoe for Edmonton House. Paddled till 6 p.m. then encamped near the North Branch.¹ The distance we have now come down before a most rapid stream in the course of seven hours took the men in the boat as many days to go up, and indeed it is almost surprising how they could possibly tug a large heavy boat through such a continual succession of rapids nor would they have done it had it not been for the spirited perseverance and abilities of the steersman Gilbert Laughton. It's therefore my intention to have a couple of large canoes² built and left inland for carrying up goods to this place in future.

October 7, Monday. A fresh breeze northerly cloudy weather. At 6 a.m. embarked, paddled with a most rapid current till 6 p.m. then encamped in company with a Canadian canoe which we overtook.³

October 8, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 6 a.m. embarked and at 2 p.m. passed a house the Canadians are building⁴ principally for a few Swampy Ground Stone Indians and to draw the other little companies after them, that they may be weakened as much as possible. At 6 p.m. encamped, the river not quite so rapid as before. Killed

¹ The Brazeau River which enters the North Saskatchewan in Township 45, Range 9, West of the Fifth Meridian. For Alexander Henry's account of the boat journey he made in 1811 from Rocky Mountain House down to Lower Terre Blanche House (where Edmonton House No. 3, which was in operation 1810-13, was also situated), see Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 738-46. See also J. B. Tyrrell's 'Map of Northern Alberta . . .' (p. 209, n. 2).

² See pp. 194, 211, 234, 236, 242.

³ Quite early during this day's journey Bird passed the place where the North West Company later built Boggy Hall (abandoned 1808). It was situated on the left or west bank of the North Saskatchewan, at the mouth of a small creek entering from the west, and a little above the Blue Rapids (Township 47, Range 9, West of the Fifth Meridian). Bird makes no reference, as does Henry, to hunting during the journey. At the end of this day Bird must have been in the area of the North West Company's future post called Fort Muskako (Muskeg), Maskake, or Quagmire Hall. This post, which had been abandoned for several years when Henry passed down the river in 1811, was on the left bank of the Saskatchewan (north of Drayton Valley) and in the vicinity of Rocky Rapids (Section 4, Township 50, Range 7, West of the Fifth Meridian). Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 650, 740; *Gazetteer of Canada, Alberta*, pp. 10, 74.

⁴ The North West Company's post referred to as 'old' White Mud Fort, Upper White Earth House, or Upper Terre Blanche. The post was on the east bank and near the mouth of Wabamun Creek, which flows south-east into the North Saskatchewan in Section 25, Township 51, Range 3, West of the Fifth Meridian. Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 633; *Place-Names of Alberta*, p. 130; *Gazetteer of Canada, Alberta*, p. 91.

a red deer, met a canoe of the N.W. Company going up to the above place with goods.

October 9, Wednesday. A fresh gale NW cloudy weather. At 6 a.m. embarked, paddled with a gentle current and now and then a strong rapid till 7 p.m. then encamped. Killed a doe red deer, met a canoe belonging Ogilby and Company¹ with a very few pieces of goods going to build at the above house.

October 10, Thursday. A light breeze northerly cloudy weather. At 6 a.m. embarked and at 10 arrived at Edmonton House. Found Mr Isham² and Gaddy with men all well, and a Mr McKinzie³ for Forsyth and Company from the firm of Fin, Ellis and Company, London,⁴ with four canoes building a house a little below us. Two canoes have arrived for the other new company (Ogilby and Company) and two more are expected so that we are four strong parties at a place that will not furnish good furs to load the canoes belonging to one.

October 11, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

October 12, Saturday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed.

October 13, Sunday. A light breeze easterly with thick snow.

October 14, Monday. A fresh breeze easterly part clear part cloudy weather. Sent three men to fetch home hay, two men sawing, one making small kegs, one assisting the boat carpenter, blacksmith making boat nails, tailor making small coats for trade, and the rest employed felling firewood.

October 15, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NE with drizzling rain. Men employed as yesterday.

October 16, Wednesday. A light breeze easterly, cloudy warm weather. Men variously employed.

October 17, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

October 18, Friday. A light breeze westerly part cloudy part clear fine weather. Men employed as before; a man came home from the hunters with meat, and returned to his tent.

¹ See p. 203, n. 2.

² See p. 212, n. 3.

³ Alexander Mackenzie ('The Emperor'), a nephew of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. See W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 475.

⁴ Forsyth, Richardson & Co. of Montreal, the Canadian subsidiary of the London house of Phyn, Ellices & Inglis. See p. 182, n. 2; p. 203, n. 2; W. Stewart Wallace, *The Pedlars from Quebec and Other Papers on the Nor' Westers* (Toronto, 1954), p. 55 *et seq.*, 'Forsyth, Richardson and Company in the Fur Trade'; and R. H. Fleming, 'Phyn, Ellice and Company of Schenectady' in *Contributions to Canadian Economics* (1932), IV, 38.

October 19, Saturday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

October 20, Sunday. A light breeze westerly clear fine weather.

October 21, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. One man with the boat builder building a boat, smith making nails, steels etc., one man making kegs, tailor making clothes, two men sawing boards for boats, and the rest employed felling firewood.

October 22, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men employed as yesterday. A man arrived from B.H. The copy of a letter received from Mr Peter Fidler.¹

Greenwich House,² Red Deers Lake, October 7th 1799.

Dear Sir, After a very tedious passage from Bolsover House (by our having to hunt for our living all the way)³ we arrived here the 26th September and found that Mr Richards⁴ had again run away and gone to the Canadians; he being the only person who understood the Bungees and Ottoways, his leaving us will be a great detriment to us and to the Honourable Company here. We have built a small house to put our little goods into, and parts of our dwelling house is logged to the windows but it will be some considerable time before we shall be able to live into it not having a saw of any sort whatever here.

On Saturday last two of our men with four horses arrived here from Buckingham House with a few small articles of trading goods and now they return to winter there with all the horses that was left here before.

Yesterday twenty Canadians in five canoes embarked from this place to erect a settlement at the Slave Lake to the SW of the Peace

¹ Fidler's version of this letter is in B.104/a/1, fos. 34d.-35.

² See pp. lxx-lxx, 212-13. The advance party of Company men from Buckingham House led by the 'Three free Canadians' (p. 206) was at 'the edge of the red Deers Lake' when Fidler arrived on 26 September. Angus Shaw had arrived at the North West Company post ten days earlier. Fidler gave the Canadians goods worth fifty made beaver for leading the advance party which had prepared some logs for building a store house 17 x 11 feet. The foundations were laid on 28 September. On 3 October the foundation was laid for a dwelling house 44 x 22 feet. B.104/a/1; E.3/2. This post, named Greenwich House, was near 'the French House' built by David Thompson the year before. See Coues, *op. cit.*, II, 575n, and for sketch map showing the site, see J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966), 'Fidler's Route to Lac la Biche', p. 117.

³ This explanation is omitted from Fidler's version of his letter in B.104/a/1, fos. 34d.-35.

⁴ See p. 207. When in Beaver River en route for Lac la Biche on 21 September, Fidler met John Irvin [1st] and Magnus Isbester 'in a small Indian canoe' travelling from Lac la Biche to Buckingham House. They informed Fidler that Angus Shaw of the North West Company had 'debauched' Richards. B.104/a/1; E.3/2. Richards never re-joined the Hudson's Bay Company. A.16/7, fo. 18; A.16/67, fo. 2.

⁵ Fidler's version continues, '& who are the only Indians about this Place'. B.104/a/1, fo. 34d. Fidler meant that Richards was the only one on the York Inland establishment who 'could speak the Bungee & Ottaway Language'. B.104/a/1, 21 September 1799.

River and very near it. I would also have gone with a few men and have built there, but we had neither provisions or stores fit for that expedition.² Most part of the Bungees³ winters here, but their long attachment to the Canadians, and this being our first year amongst them, our prospect of trade in consequence I doubt will not be much this winter. Wishing you health and a good trade I remain dear sir your humble servant, P. Fidler.

The copy of a letter⁴ received from Mr William Auld.

Green Lake,⁵ 6th September 1799. Mr William Tomison or the officer commanding in his absence.

Sir, I have to inform you that I arrived at this place on the 29th ultimo. I brought three boats and one canoe to the Isle Le Cross Lake. Mr Linklater accompanied me to the above lake where I left him⁶ with a large assortment of goods fit for trading with the Ochipoyeans⁷ and proceeded hither with two boats. Trusting to the remains of brandy inland from last year I did not take any quantity

¹ Fidler's Greenwich House journal entry for 6 October 1799 reads in part: 'The Canadian Master here [Angus Shaw] sent away 5 Canoes to erect a House at the Mouth of the Slave Indian river about 9 Days Journey from here where nearly all the Ottaways, which is 11 & 5 Bungees are to winter. We would have accompanied them also but we had neither stores or Provisions fit for the undertaking...'. B.104/a/1.

² Fidler's version continues, 'nor indeed would the men agree to it had we have had plenty of every thing, of Late the men are nearly become their own Masters, & unless an alteration is made soon it will be a great hurt to the Honourable Companies affairs Inland'. B.104/a/1, fo. 34d. See *supra*, p. kvii *et seq.*

³ Fidler's version adds: (13). B.104/a/1, fo. 35.

⁴ Auld did not enter a copy or refer to this letter in his 'Journal of Occurrences during an Expedition to Beaver River from Churchill Factory 1800', B.84/a/1.

⁵ See p. 213, n. 4. Fidler, who had travelled up Beaver River in advance of Auld, entered this lake 'full of a Green floating grass' and providing 'the best & firmest Tickameg' in plenty on 28 August. He said that there had been a Canadian post on the lake 'since or before' the smallpox outbreak of 1781. There were about thirty Southern Indian hunters in the area who seldom visited their countrymen on the Saskatchewan. Auld, who arrived at Green Lake on 29 August, built his post 'about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile from the Canadian House', and on 25 September sent William Flew and five men 'to the Waterfowl [Waterhen] Lake' to build a post and 'exert themselves in opposition to the Canadians'. E.3/2, fos. 47d.-48d.; B.84/a/1.

⁶ William Linklater and six men were left on 24 August to build a post near the Canadian one which was at the southern end of the lake, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile north-east of the one where Patrick Small of the North West Company gave shelter to Turnor, Ross and Fidler during the winter of 1790-91. Linklater, who was apparently opposed by a Mr McTavish during 1799-1800, sent three of his men 'to winter at the Buffalo Lake about 50 miles distance to oppose the Canadians who have settled there'. B.84/a/1; B.104/a/1; E.4/3, fo. 46; J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 357 *et seq.*

⁷ Chipewyans. The 'Northern Indians' of the Hudson's Bay Company. See Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; In the Years 1789 and 1793* (London, 1801), 'Some Account of the Chepewyan Indians', pp. cxvi-cxxii; Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), Chapter VII, 'Chepawyans', pp. 105-7.

from the factory¹ adequate to the wants of one house, but on my arrival at our settlements below from here to my great disappointment found only four kegs instead of twenty or thirty, and it required one of these to fill the other three. I have at this moment no more than eight and a half kegs which you will allow is by no means sufficient for half the year. More especially among Southern Indians. I have been under the disagreeable necessity of taking the people's allowance to help out. You will I hope therefore see the necessity of my requesting you to supply me with six kegs at least, if you could possibly spare more it would be a means of supporting us effectually, the more so as without a little brandy it will be needless to leave men here in the summer to procure provisions etc. for our other expeditions. You will consider the great distances we have come, not less than 700 miles above the settlement from which we had the last supply, which therefore requires that we should be able to carry provisions down with us to leave by the way for our use in coming up again. By the first opportunity I request an answer. In the mean time I remain your most obedient servant, William Auld.

October 23, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. Three Blood Indians arrived.

October 24, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday went away.

October 25, Friday. A fresh breeze easterly cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

October 26, Saturday. A light breeze westerly. Cloudy warm weather. Tradesmen etc. as before, the rest employed cutting firewood and cleaning the yard. Took a new boat off the stocks.

October 27, Sunday. A fresh breeze cloudy weather.

October 28, Monday. A fresh breeze easterly cloudy weather, snow in the course of last night. The boatbuilder and one man beginning another boat, blacksmith making nails etc., one man making kegs, one taking care of the horses, two sawing, tailor making clothes, and the rest felling firewood.

October 29, Tuesday. A fresh breeze westerly clear warm weather. Men employed as before.

October 30, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

October 31, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as before, a man from the hunting tent for people to fetch meat.

¹ Churchill Factory.

November 1, Friday. Light airs SW clear weather. John Park with five men getting ready to go and build where the French have a house about eight[y] miles above this. Sent three with horses for meat and the rest employed as before.

November 2, Saturday. Light airs NW cloudy weather. Sent John Park and five men with horses loaded with goods, provisions etc. to build a house about eighty miles higher up the river¹ principally on account the Swampy Ground Stone Indians, great part of which are hunting beaver near that place that have hitherto traded at Buckingham and Edmonton Houses, but it is principally done with a view of distressing the new companies who are very ill off for able traders, consequently unable to oppose us effectually at every place. We have been under the necessity of building three new houses² which will occasion very great additional expenses without any increase of trade as they are merely for the same Indians (unless the Cotta na has should visit Acton House³ which is not very probable). The men that went for meat arrived, the rest employed as before.

November 3, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly cloudy warm weather.

November 4, Monday. A fresh gale westerly cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

November 5, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent Mr Isham and one man with an Indian to look for the Southerd Indians, and see where they intend wintering, the rest employed as before.

November 6, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same.

November 7, Thursday. A light breeze NW clear fine weather. Men employed as before.

November 8, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

November 9, Saturday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men employed as before. Two Blood Indians arrived with a few small foxes and a little dried provisions.

November 10, Sunday. A fresh gale NW cloudy weather. Evening clear. A man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

November 11, Monday. A light breeze westerly cloudy cold weather. Sent three men with the man who arrived yesterday to fetch meat. Carpenters building a boat, two men sawing, one planine canoe wood,

¹ To build Nelson House (p. 225), at or near the North West Company's 'old' White Mud Fort (see p. 214, n. 4).

² Acton, Nelson and Somerset Houses on the North Saskatchewan River.

³ P. 210, n. 4.

tailor making clothing for trade etc., blacksmith making iron work for the boats, and the other two men employed making carrots of tobacco from damaged leaf tobacco for the Slave Indian Trade. Ice driving in the river.

November 12, Tuesday. A strong gale WNW. Cloudy weather evening clear. The men who went away yesterday arrived with part of the meat of two bulls and one doe moose, the rest employed as before.

November 13, Wednesday. A light breeze NW. Cloudy weather. Early a.m. Mr Isham and Indian arrived, the man who went with them remains with the Indians to take care of their skins. Three men employed cutting firewood and the rest as before. Ice driving in the river.

November 14, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. At 7 p.m. Mr Sutherland and three men arrived with a packet from York Factory and letters from Messrs Howse, Hallett, and Flett etc.¹ The copy of a letter from Mr Joseph Howse.²

Carlton House, October 23rd 1799.

Dear Sir, Mr James Sutherland who brings you this arrived here the 13th instant with the packet from York, which I have taken the earliest opportunity of forwarding to you. As he came from the Factory with only eight men, he could leave no more than two at Cumberland House in addition to the two who were there before; I have since sent three others to their assistance. The old company³ have quite deserted Cumberland House and are gone up the Pas, or Carrot River and the new company⁴ are alongside of them.

There is one piece of intelligence you will learn that will surprise you not less than it has me and of which I am almost afraid to look forward to the consequences, I mean that of no men coming out to York this year.⁵ As it is a matter of importance I feel myself half-inclined to trouble you with my conjectures on the effect it may too probably produce on the affairs of the Honourable Company, but on the other hand am apprehensive that I may incur a suspicion of being actuated by sinister motives and that it may be deemed incompatible with the station I hold in the Honourable Company's employ to obtrude observations which may seem from the subject-matter to implicate the conduct of those higher in command I must therefore

¹ Copies of the letters from Hallett at Somerset House and Alexander Flett (B.20/a/1, fo. 6) at Buckingham House have not been found.

² There are no Carlton House records for season 1799-1800, but there is a copy of Howse's letter in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fo. 22d.

³ North West Company.

⁴ The Forsyth, Richardson & Co.-Leith, Jamieson & Co. interest, or Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy.

⁵ See p. 224, n. 1.

for the present content myself with expressing my most ardent wish that our petty animosities and silly competitions may never supersede a due consideration of the purposes for which we come into this country and that the Honourable Company's business may still be carried on to their advantage and our credit. I remain dear sir your most obedient servant, Jos. Howse.

November 15, Friday. A light breeze northerly clear fine weather. Sent James Gaddy with an Indian who arrived yesterday to fetch furs, the rest employed as before. Several Blackfoot Indians arrived.

November 16, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away, their trade consisted of a few wolves, small foxes and a little dried provisions. Three more Blackfeet Indians arrived, traded and went away also.

November 17, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. A man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat. Much ice driving in the river.

November 18, Monday. A light breeze northerly clear sharp weather. Sent off the three men who arrived here the 14th instant with some goods for B.H.¹ and the following letters for Messrs Howse, Hallett and Auld.² The river froze over below. Men employed as before, the man who arrived yesterday returned to his tent. The copy of a letter sent to Mr Howse.

Edmonton House, November 18th 1799.

Dear Sir, Your agreeable favour as also the packet from YF I had the pleasure to receive by the arrival of Mr Sutherland on the 14th instant.

Since most of the Cumberland House Indians have followed the Canadians to Root River,³ it is necessary that some steps should be taken to secure at least a part of their hunts. I wish therefore that you could send a couple of men and desire Magnus Twatt either to remove to Root River immediately or endeavour to find the Indians and fetch what furs they may kill to Cumberland House.⁴

¹ Bolsover House, presumably.

² According to Pruden's Bolsover House journal, on 3 December he received a letter from Bird dated Edmonton House, 18 November 1799, reading: 'As there is a great want of Men at Buckingham House from the Great Number of Indians who come there and the Strength of the new Oppositions At that place I have desired Alex Flett to send to you for a couple of Men who you will please to send him as soon as possible and should there be still no Indians near You nor any Great Probability of Many coming there this Winter let Hugh Sabbeston Accompany them. I remain Yours &c. James Bird. P.S. I believe Alexr. Flett will be Under the Necessity of sending to You for Blue Corded Cloth in case You can spare any.' Pruden sent Hugh Sabbeston and two men to Buckingham House from Bolsover House on 3 February 1800. B.20/a/1.

³ Carrot River. *Place-Names of Manitoba* (Ottawa, Geographic Board of Canada, 1933), p. 21

⁴ See pp. 232, 236.

We have been under the necessity of settling such a number of new houses that we find ourselves much at a loss for men to oppose our new opponents with that vigour it will require. I however hope we shall be able to prevent their making fortunes this year but am absolutely afraid to look forward to the next, since no men are brought by last ship to supply the places of the great number which will unavoidably return to England next year.¹ This will in my opinion give a check to the success of the Company's concerns in this quarter and in a most critical time when two strong parties are endeavouring to establish themselves, who by succeeding will effectually ruin the trade of this country or at least reduce the profits, already small, to a mere trifle, and when merely to bring a quantity of goods inland is no longer all that is necessary; men are now required to dispose of it, or it will infallibly remain on hand or must be given for such furs as others cannot find their interest in taking. It will also effectually prevent any settlements being formed in the only country where good furs are now to be had in any quantity; a country from which the Canadians carry out annually five hundred packs of the choicest furs (which they purchase with about 200 pieces of bad goods) and from whence the fortunes they have so rapidly made have been principally drawn. Notwithstanding the failures of some who had every difficulty thrown in their road by a narrow minded superior,² jealous of their success, whose duty it however was to have supported them, the settling of the Athapuskow (in part at least) would by no means be attended with such difficulties as the Honourable Company are probably led to suppose; in short had we men or could we even retain those we now have, I would venture to answer for accomplishing it, but perhaps the Honourable Company think that their servants from Churchill will be fully able to settle this country, though on the contrary I will venture to affirm (and time will evince the truth of the assertion) that though these may by surmounting the greatest difficulties succeed in getting there with a few small boats (a craft totally unfit for an undertaking in which expedition is required and where there are a number of shoal rivers and long portages), it will still require the utmost exertions of them and York Fort a number of years to settle the whole of that extensive and valuable country. Wishing you every success I remain dear sir your most humble servant, James Bird.

¹ See p. 224, n. 1.

² William Tomison, presumably.

The copy of a letter sent to Mr Henry Hallett.¹

Edmonton House, November 18th 1799.

Dear Sir, By the arrival of Mr Sutherland the 14th instant I received your kind letters with the packet from YF etc.

I have sent by the bearers the things you request as far as in my power, also a piece of blue corded cloth which you will please to forward to Mr Howse as soon as possible by sending a man with James Gaddy. I am sensible how ill you can spare any person to accompany him but we are equally distressed here for men; the number of houses we have been under the necessity of settling have so scattered us that there is scarcely a sufficient number of men at some of them to ensure the safety of the Company's property, much more to oppose our new opponents with that vigour which is necessary. I however hope that we can prevent them making their fortunes this year, but from no men coming out per last ship am absolutely afraid to look forward to the next. Wishing you every success I remain dear sir yours etc., James Bird.

The copy of a letter sent to Mr Robert Longmoor.²

¹ Hallett made no mention of this letter in his 'Somerset House, Turtle Creek, America' journal for 1799-1800, B.204/a/1.

² Longmoor had, after all, returned to the Swan River District. See p. 191. The original addressed 'Mr Robert Longmoor Swan River - Publick' is sealed between folios 6d. and 7 in the 'Red River Charlton House Journal' for 1799-1800, B.28/a/5. There is also a copy of the above letter to Longmoor in the York Factory correspondence book, B.239/b/63, fo. 23. Longmoor replied to Bird on 12 February 1800: 'By the arrival of the Canadian Pacquet of the 1st Instant at 10 P.M. I had the pleasure of receiving your kind favour of the 17th November, Sir I arrived at the long Carrying place the 9th of September, but continual Gales of wind Set in and it was the 23d before I got to Swan River and Mr Isham met one Indian in the Sedar Lake and informed him that no Englishman was to be so that the Canadians got all the Indians that was good for any thing, and indeed there is no doing any thing even not for Provisions only for themselves we have been starving ever sence we arrived untill the 20th January, [John] Sutherland [from Albany] arrived after the River was Fast and has been living upon Rabbits and Partridges ever since Chiefly. Sir, Had I known that the Albany Men had been to come to red River I should have proceeded with two light Canoes and taken away the Men and what remained, Mr Swain trusted a great dale of Debt in the Summer and all principal goods and I have not got one Skin of it and I do not expect to get one, and when I went from Swan River I left orders with him not to trust any Debts to any Indians before the arrival of the Canoes. If I had not received a Letter from you Should have left the place in the Spring as it will never be worth our while to come here any more as Indians does nothing in this quarter but run from place to place to place and Beaver they will not work for, as for the Quantity of Men gone home, I am not surprised at, when the Churchill Chief and Second came to York for no Good for it as I informed Mr Tominson and Mr Ballenden at York when I was down, But I am surprised that no men arrived with the Ship which will be a great Loss to the Trade and the Inland from it. Sir I hope if health permits to meet you at Cumberland House in the Spring and I remain Yours most Sincerely (Signed) Robert Longmoor'. B.28/a/5, fos. 7d.-8. Longmoor was referring to a visit made by Stayner and Auld to Ballanden in the early weeks of 1799. B.239/a/101.

Edmonton House, November 18th 1799.

Dear Sir, By your letters from YF you will be informed of the arrival of the *King George*, and that Mr Tomison is gone to England. I shall therefore not trouble you with particulars; but cannot help mentioning a piece of intelligence that must astonish you as it has done us, and which we are absolutely at a loss to account for viz. that no men are brought to the country and that upwards of twenty have returned to England;¹ the ill consequences that must arise from this are so obvious that they cannot help occurring to you and make it quite unnecessary for me to enumerate them.

Should the trade at Swan River be no better than usual and people from Albany still in that quarter, it will be necessary for you to abandon that place entirely in the spring of the year and send any goods that may remain to Cumberland House; or should you think the place still worth returning to, even considering the scarcity there must be of men next year, it will be necessary to take all the men or at least leave as few as possible.² Wishing you every success I remain dear sir yours etc., James Bird.

The copy of a letter sent to Mr Auld.

Edmonton House, November 18th 1799.

Dear Sir, I forbear to give you any determinative answer with regard to the spirits you wish us to furnish you till the packet arrives from YF, when it will be known what quantity can be spared and whether Mr Tomison (who it is supposed will winter at Cumberland House but may possibly come higher) returns to this place or not.³ We are so strongly opposed here by three different parties of Canadians and our goods disposed amongst so many different houses, which of course create additional expenditure, that I am much afraid our present stock of spirits cannot allow us to supply you with the

¹ The employees on the York Inland establishment for season 1798–99 numbered 167 and for season 1799–1800, 147. A.30/9, fos. 28–41; A.30/10, fos. 27–39.

² See p. lxxiii. Longmoor transferred his 'New Charlton [Carlton] House' on the Assiniboine River to John Sutherland of the Albany Inland establishment on 22 March 1800. Longmoor then remarked to the effect that the transfer had been made because he and Sutherland in competition had been injuring rather than promoting the Company's trade. B.28/a/5; B.3/b/37, fo. 33d. Swan River House, which Longmoor had also operated in season 1799–1800, was left 'for good' in May 1800. His journal entries for 1 and 9 May explain that this post was abandoned not only because there were only four Indians within about 130 miles and of these two always traded with and hunted for food for the Canadians, but also because 'overland carriage' was so expensive and there were 'no good furs to be procured'. B.28/a/5.

³ This would have been one of the problems discussed when Auld unexpectedly arrived at Edmonton House on 16 January 1800.

quantity you request; but however should it rest with me, you may depend upon my furnishing you with what can possibly be spared without injury to our own settlements. I shall just take the liberty to observe that the Beaver River from the little knowledge I have of it does not appear to be a place capable of furnishing you with that quantity of dried provisions you seem to require, and that you might in my opinion be amply provided and at a much less expense from Buckingham House nor would this be attended with any very great difficulties. I remain sir yours etc., James Bird.

November 19, Tuesday. A light breeze northerly cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

November 20, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. A man arrived from the hunting tent with meat.

November 21, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as before. The man who arrived yesterday went away. Five Fall Indian young men arrived, carrying a few wolves for tobacco etc.

November 22, Friday. Light airs northerly with snow. Sent four men with horses for meat, also one man to remain at the hunting tent. The rest employed as before.

November 23, Saturday. Light airs NW clear weather. The men who went away yesterday arrived, the rest employed as before. The Fall Indians went away; one man arrived from Nelson House¹ for horses etc.

November 24, Sunday. A strong breeze northerly cloudy weather.

November 25, Monday. A light breeze NW. Cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

November 26, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent Mr Isham and one man to endeavour to collect part of the debts of the Indians he came from the 13th instant, the rest employed as before. The man who arrived on Saturday returned to his house.

November 27, Wednesday. Light airs northerly cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

November 28, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

November 29, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same.

November 30, Saturday. Light airs northerly with snow last night. Men employed as before. A man arrived from the hunting tent with the meat of a moose deer.

December 1, Sunday. Light airs northerly. Cloudy weather.

¹ P. 219, n. 1.

December 2, Monday. Light airs northerly with snow. Sent three men with the man who arrived on Saturday for meat, the rest employed as before.

December 3, Tuesday. A light breeze westerly. Clear weather. The men who went away yesterday arrived with the meat of two red deer and a bull, the rest employed as before.

December 4, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

December 5, Thursday. Light airs variable cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

December 6, Friday. A fresh breeze westerly. Cloudy weather. Sent Mr Sutherland and one man accompanied by three men from the N.W. Company (in consequence of an agreement we have entered into to render each other every assistance in our powers without prejudice to our separate interests, that can enable us the more effectually to oppose our new opponents) to follow seven men who are gone off from the new Company's house in course of last night, and who we suspect are going to Red Deers Lake. Men employed as before.

December 7, Saturday. A light breeze westerly. Clear weather. Men employed as before.

December 8, Sunday. A fresh breeze northerly with thick snow.

December 9, Monday. A fresh breeze NW. Clear weather. Carpenters, smith and tailor employed at their respective duties, the rest cutting firewood. A man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.

December 10, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent two men with the man who arrived yesterday for meat, the rest employed as before. Mr Sutherland arrived, those he followed having taken the road to Buckingham House.

December 11, Wednesday. Light airs southerly. Cloudy weather. The men who went away yesterday arrived with a moose and red deer.

December 12, Thursday. Light airs northerly with a little snow. Men employed as before.

December 13, Friday. A fresh breeze westerly cloudy weather. Men employed as before. Mr Isham and party arrived with 125 made beaver in furs.

December 14, Saturday. Light airs westerly. Clear weather. Men employed as before. A few Fall Indians arrived with a few furs, they tell us that it is with the utmost difficulty they can live, no buffalo being to be had in their country etc.

December 15, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

December 16, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as

before. At 2 p.m. one man arrived from Buckingham House, he came with some men belonging to the new company who have brought goods to this place, but were supposed to have intended carrying them to Red Deers Lake. Late in the evening, another man arrived from B.H. with letters from Messrs Howse, Hallett, Pruden and Flett, who all inform me that there is very poor appearances for trade in their several quarters.¹ The Indians went away.

December 17, Tuesday. A light breeze NW. Cloudy weather. Sent Mr Isham and two men with a tent and liquor etc. to remain with the Indians and take care of their skins they may kill, as we are very apprehensive that the two new companies will embrace every opportunity of going to them privately with liquor, goods etc. Men employed as before.

December 18, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

December 19, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same.

December 20, Friday. A fresh breeze westerly. Cloudy weather. The men who arrived on Monday last returned to B.H. The rest employed as before.

December 21, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. A few Southerd Indians arrived.

December 22, Sunday. A light breeze southerly. Clear weather. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

December 23, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent two men with three Southerd Indians who arrived at the N.W. Company's house yesterday to fetch furs. Carpenters, smith, tailor and cooper employed at their respective duties, the rest of the men employed cutting firewood.

December 24, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men employed as before. A man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat. Mr Fidler and three men arrived from Red Deer Lake² for goods etc.

December 25, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

December 26, Thursday. Wind and weather as before.

December 27, Friday. A light breeze NW cloudy weather. Sent three men for meat, the rest employed as before.

December 28, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men who went for meat yesterday arrived with three bulls, also the men who went

¹ Copies have not been traced.

² Fidler left William Flett in charge of Greenwich House and set out on 18 December 'with 3 men dogs & sledges to fetch several necessary articles of Trading Goods from Edmonton House & to settle with Mr Bird respecting whether our House here is to be kept in the Summer or not as there is very few men'. B.104/a/1, fo. 21-21d.

off the 23rd arrived. Sent James Gaddy and one man with an Indian for furs. Mr Fidler with an Indian set off on horseback on his return to Red Deers Lake, his men also with dogs and sleds loaded with goods to go by the way of B.H. (as they think it impracticable to return by the way they came) with loaded sleds on account of the many thickets.¹ The copy of a letter sent to Mr Howse.

Edmonton House, December 28th 1799.

Dear Sir, As I imagine you can very well spare William Walker,² and that he may prove useful to Mr Fidler who has no interpreter for the Bungees, I have therefore desired Mr Hallet to send down a couple of men to accompany him up and fetch the few things left at your house last fall, particularly the guns with bayonets etc.

Mr Fidler arrived here a few days since from Red Deers Lake for goods etc., he sets off tomorrow on his return home.

We have very poor appearances in this quarter both as to trade and provisions. From a want of buffalo in their country the Slave Indians have confined all their exertions to the procuring provisions for their own families, consequently very few of them have hitherto visited the houses, and even those have brought very little with them. Wishing you better success, I remain dear sir yours etc., James Bird.

December 29, Sunday. Wind and weather as before.

December 30, Monday. A fresh breeze westerly. Cloudy weather, tradesmen employed at their several duties, and the rest of the men hauling firewood etc. with horses.

¹ Fidler arrived back at Greenwich House on the night of 31 December. The men who returned by way of Buckingham House arrived on 7 January 1800. On 25 January 1800 Fidler again left William Flett in charge of Greenwich House while he went with two Company men and three Canadians 'to their Settlement in the Athapescow River'. He wrote, 'The reason of my Going there in company of the Canadians is to find the way there again, should any of Your Honours Servants be sent into that Quarter to erect any Settlements to Trade with the Bungee & Ottayays, should they winter again thereabout, for an account of my Survey there, see the End of this Book'. B.104/a/1. Fidler's official 'Journal of a Journey from Red Deers Lake to the mouth of Slave Indian River', begins on fo. 36d. He was back at Greenwich House (where he found James Bird awaiting him) on 5 February. In the version of this journal which Fidler wrote at some later date (p. xxix) and entitled, 'Journal from Greenwich House Red Deers Lake, up the Athapescow River to the Canadian settlement at the mouth of the Little Slave Lake River, 1800, by Peter Fidler' and which covered 25 January to 5 February 1800 (E.3/2, fos. 56d.-60), he named his Company companions as John Ballenden (? which one) and Magnus Isbester. His Canadian companions were Mr Robert Henry and two others.

² William Walker, born in Rupert's Land about 1782, became a Company apprentice in 1797. A.30/10, fo. 38. He was referred to by Henry Hallett on 17 February 1800 as 'the Deceased Mr Walker son'. B.204/a/1. The deceased Mr Walker was the William Walker (died 13 October 1792) mentioned frequently in *H.B.R.S.*, XIV, XV and J. B. Tyrrell, editor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934).

December 31, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same. Our hunter and a man arrived from the hunting tent.

January 1, 1800, Wednesday. A fresh breeze westerly. Cloudy warm weather.

January 2, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The hunter and man who arrived on Tuesday returned to their tent.

January 3, Friday. A fresh gale NE cloudy weather. Sent two men for meat, the rest employed as before.

January 4, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same, those who went for meat yesterday arrived, James Gaddy and man arrived.

January 5, Sunday. Wind and weather as before.

January 6, Monday. A light breeze westerly cloudy weather. Sent three men for meat, and the rest variously employed. A Southerd Indian arrived.

January 7, Tuesday. Light airs NW. Cloudy warm weather. Men variously employed, those that went for meat yesterday arrived with three bulls.

January 8, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen employed at their respective duties and the rest hauling home firewood.

January 9, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as yesterday. Two Fall Indian young men arrived for tobacco; one man in company with some Canadians arrived from Mr Isham with 120 made beaver.

January 10, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same. The young Fall Indians who arrived yesterday went away with tobacco, a little powder and brandy. This last article our new opponents have reduced us to the necessity of sending they having sent small kegs of brandy to the chiefs with extraordinary quantities of tobacco in order to entice them to their houses. At 2 p.m. two tents of Fall Indians arrived.

January 11, Saturday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear thawing weather. Men employed as before. The Fall Indians of yesterday traded and went away, when a dispute took place between them and a few Southerd Indians who are tenting at the houses which would have perhaps ended in a battle had not the Fall Indians taken to their heels.

January 12, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. A few Blood Indians arrived with a few wolves, foxes etc., they say that they are unable to kill wolves for want of both snow and buffalo, and that they have slept twenty-two nights in their way to the house.

January 13, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Sent two men (one of which is to go to Red Deers Lake) with a little brandy etc. to where

Mr Isham is tenting with the Indians, the rest variously employed. The Blood Indians of yesterday went away.

January 14, Tuesday. Light airs westerly. Cloudy warm weather. Sent two men for meat and the rest variously employed.

January 15, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men who went for meat yesterday arrived, the rest employed as before.

January 16, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Sent three men for meat, the rest variously employed. At 2 p.m. Mr Auld from Green Lake¹ and Mr Pruden from Bolsover House with one man arrived.

January 17, Friday. Light airs westerly. Clear fine weather. The men who went for meat yesterday arrived, the rest employed as before.

January 18, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent off two men with goods etc. for Buckingham House, the rest employed as before. Three free Frenchmen arrived for a supply of provisions, brought a few skins.

January 19, Sunday. Light airs westerly clear warm weather.

January 20, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Messrs. Auld

¹ In early January 1800 Auld wrote in the Green Lake journal: 'Having considered with Mr Linklater the means most likely to render the plans of the ensuing year successful in this part of the Country but more particularly to facilitate our expeditions to the Northward which the arrival of a considerable number of Men at Churchill with Mr Ross last year may enable us to undertake. The following immediately occurred to our consideration. First that we ought to have a considerable stock of Provisions procured for the use of those people who may be destined to the Northward that they may be enabled to proceed with dispatch before the Canadians can return from the Grand Portage. Secondly It is also necessary to have Canoes for that expedition as it will be exceedingly difficult if not impossible to launch our heavy Boats over such a Long Portage as the Methy or La Loch Portage which at best would detain them a very long time by which means they would be overtaken by the Canadians which must render the plans more unproductive. And Lastly with regard to this House at the Green Lake it will be necessary to keep it up during the Summer as by relinquishing it we immediately give the Natives room to suspect that we don't intend to return by which they will continue their attachment to the Canadians which ought to be our constant business to weaken. But among all my People there is none who can talk with the Natives or who understand them. We therefore have thought it prudent & necessary to apply to Mr Bird for his assistance in the business. With regard to Provisions they are not to be procured here in Beaver River in such plenty nor if they could can they be got but at a very heavy expence whereas at the Houses belonging to York in the Saskatchewan River there are several tribes of Indians who chiefly bring in Provisions which cost little or nothing & where they are to be had in great abundance. That there are Canoes to spare we cannot doubt when we have seen several sent up to Beaver River when it must have been known that we from Churchill were also going there which has & will continue to cause a greater expence than necessary. And lastly in respect of a Man we know they have a considerable number of old hands who are sufficiently skilled in the Language to take charge of this place during my absence in the Summer & one of which they can spare in the room of one of mine and that nothing might be wanting to render our application successful I intend to go in person to Edmonton House however disagreeable the journey may prove. Mr Linklater will stay here during my absence as Indians are continually going & coming whereas there are no hopes of any Natives coming to Mr Linklater's House at Isle a la Cross till they come in the spring'. Auld left Green Lake post with '2 Englishmen & an Indian' on 4 January. B.84/a/1. He reached Bolsover House on the same day and on the 6th left with Pruden for Edmonton House. B.20/a/1. They arrived at Buckingham House on 11[?13] January and set off from there for Edmonton House on the same day. B.104/a/1, fo. 35d.

and Pruden set off with horses for Buckingham House.¹ Tradesmen employed at their respective duties and the rest employed cutting firewood.

January 21, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before, men's employ as yesterday. The free Frenchmen received a supply of provisions and went away.

January 22, Wednesday. Light airs NW cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

January 23, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

January 24, Friday. Light airs westerly cloudy part clear. Men variously employed.

January 25, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

January 26, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly cloudy weather.

January 27, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

January 28, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed. Three Fall Indian young men arrived for tobacco.

January 29, Wednesday. A light breeze SE clear weather. Men variously employed. Two tents of Fall Indians arrived.

January 30, Thursday. A light breeze westerly cloudy warm weather. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away.

January 31, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

February 1 [MS: January 32], Saturday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same.

February 2 [MS: January 33], Sunday. A strong breeze NW cloudy cold weather with a little snow. A man arrived from the hunting tent for men to fetch meat.²

¹ Bolsover House journal, 30 January 1800, 'Mr Auld Myself [J. P. Pruden] and 2 Men Arrived from Buckingham House and Mr Auld set off immediately for Green Lake'. B.20/a/1. Green Lake journal, 30 January 1800, 'I arrived at my House about midnight after having travelled about 70 Miles since Morning the first half of the way I rode when I arrived at Mr Pruden's House where I heard of the above accident [John Tillock having been accidentally shot through a leg] when I immediately set off on foot upon examining his Leg found a very grievous wound'. 31 January 1800, 'I arrived at Edmonton House on the 16th where I found Mr Bird & people all well. He has promised if he can spare it to supply me with as much provision as will be a good help to us & has promised also to let me have 2 Canoes which he says are all he can give & likewise he will exchange a Man for one of mine during the Summer to take charge of this House he has also given orders to Mr Pruden to supply me with several articles of trading Goods the want of which has been severely felt by me.' B.84/a/1.

² According to the Greenwich House journal (B.104/a/1), James Bird and one man arrived there from Edmonton House on 2 February 1800 in company with 'Mr McKenzie & one man' who were visiting Angus Shaw's post on Lac la Biche. Bird went to Greenwich House 'to settle matters for the Summer &c' with Peter Fidler who was then returning from his journey to the mouth of Lesser Slave River. See p. 228, n. 1. Fidler reached Greenwich House on 5 February and Bird set off on his return to Edmonton House via Buckingham House on 7 February.

February 3, Monday. Light airs SW clear weather. Sent four men for meat, the rest variously employed.

February 4, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

February 5, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before, the men who went for meat on Monday arrived, the rest employed as before.

February 6, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Sent four men for meat, and the rest variously employed.

February 7, Friday. A light breeze NE clear weather. Men variously employed. Several Susseu Indians arrived with a few furs.

February 8, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. The men who went for meat on Thursday arrived, the rest employed as before.

February 9, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. The Indians went away.

February 10, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Sent two men for meat the rest variously employed.

February 11, Tuesday. A fresh gale NE with snow. Men employed as before. Two Blood Indians arrived with a few furs, also two men arrived from Nelson House.

February 12, Wednesday. Light airs NW clear weather. Men employed as before. The Indians of yesterday went away, the men who went for meat arrived.

February 13, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

February 14,¹ Friday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Hugh Sabeston and one man arrived from Buckingham House, men variously employed. The copy of a letter from Mr Howse.

Carleton House, December 21st 1800 [1799].

Sir, I received yesterday your esteemed favour of November 18th ultimo on the arrival of James Gaddy. About an hour before arrived two men from Cumberland House, the latter brought me the unpleasant intelligence of their not having been able to discover the situation of the Canadian settlements up the Root River nor the hunting ground of the Indians, though two men with an Indian woman for their guide had been absent from the house ten days in search of them. I have in consequence and in obedience to your desire made some arrangement and intend to take such steps as I think will lead us to the Indians and I hope secure a considerable part of their debts.

On the remaining part of your letter which relates to the many

¹ Bird had presumably returned from Lac la Biche by this time.

inconveniences you labour under and the mischievous consequences that must ensue, I am deterred from making any remarks by the reasons assigned in my former letter to you. I am sorry however to observe that your sentiments so nearly coincide with my own. The comparatively exhausted state of our accustomed resources in this river, the augmented and still increasing strength of our opponents, and our own enfeebled situation, are circumstances of too sable a complexion from which to augur a favourable issue. I assure you, sir, when I reflect on these things I shudder at the barren prospect that opens upon my view, and look round on all sides, but in vain for one gleam of hope to enliven the gloomy scene that presents itself to my imagination.

The season is at length arrived for which we so long waited with an anxious though unavailing solicitude. We indulged the pleasant hope that, being no longer embarrassed with the contests and animosities of rivals or shackled with the severe influence of deeply rooted prejudices, and under the sole guidance of our Honourable employers' interest we should be enabled to rouse ourselves from that lethargic stupor that has so long confounded our intellects and benumbed our feelings that we should emerge from that torpid inactivity that has characterised all our undertakings and at last, though late, start into action. Already were we, in idea, exploring the utmost limits of the Atha pus kaw and were happy in the expectation of bringing to our Honourable masters, of its richest produce. But alas a sad reverse do we experience, those hopes so fondly cherished are blasted in the bud.

Still are we doomed to plod, though not perhaps with Christian patience, this long trodden and almost worn out road without deriving credit to ourselves or emolument to the Honourable Company and thus are instructed by untoward fate to rest content with simple gleanings, which [*sic* ?while] our happier neighbours are reaping the glowing first fruits of an abundant harvest.

But it is the deed of the Honourable Committee and as such commands our respect, yet I cannot help entertaining a wish that the gentlemen who gave to their Honours counsel, so pernicious in its consequences (though doubtless they were actuated by the purest motives), had first taken it into their very serious consideration and well weighed the probable effects of a measure, the adoption of which so convulses the whole frame of the establishment, and threatens almost, if I may so express myself, the total stagnation of its operative faculties.

That we should be obliged to relinquish the Northward is a

particular circumstance which I very much regret, as I am sure you do. An attempt to develop the causes of our unhappy failures hitherto in that quarter perhaps were invidious, but I hesitate not to say that in my expectations of success in that country at the present period I was very sanguine, and in this I was confirmed by the eagerness uniformly displayed by my brother officers to engage in an undertaking which they were convinced must ultimately [MS: unlimetely] prove so incalculably beneficial to the Honourable Company. We are however debarred from making ourselves so useful to our honourable employers as we could wish but since it's their Honours' pleasure we must respectfully submit. Our leaving the northward perhaps is in one point of view an evil of a secondary and transient nature and what another year might remedy; but when we behold it as imparting strength and consequence to this host of newly acquired opponents with whom we are surrounded, it cannot fail to call forth the most alarming apprehensions for the future prosperity of the Honourable Company's concerns, since far from having a tendency to the extermination of our enemies, it seems to lead only to the extinction of our own commerce.

It would be the height of presumption to suppose that any suggestions of mine could deserve the notice of the Honourable Committee, as not possessing that weight which commonly attaches to maturer years, and as wanting that cogency which it may be the peculiar privilege of a long servitude to confer; I can therefore only beg leave to second you with my most ardent wishes that the affairs of the Honourable Company will speedily present a more pleasing aspect and enable you with vigour and effect to settle that extensive and valuable country. Wishing you every success, I am Sir your most obedient servant, Joseph Howse.

February 15, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

February 16, Sunday. Light airs westerly clear weather.

February 17, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent five men for meat. Mr Isham with two men to Southerd Indians' tents for to trade fat etc., one man taking care of the horses, and the blacksmith and boat builder employed at their respective duties. Sent Hugh Sabeston and one man to take charge of Nelson House with orders for John Park to come to this place to build canoes.

February 18, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ the same.

February 19, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. The men who went for meat on Monday arrived with the meat of eight cows, the rest as before. Two men arrived from Buckingham House for goods etc., they passed a vast number of Blackfeets tenting on the north side of the river who however treated them very civilly.

February 20, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Sent three men for meat the rest as before. Two Blackfeets and a few Fall Indians arrived with a very few furs.

February 21, Friday. Light airs NW clear warm weather. Men employed as yesterday. The Indians who arrived yesterday traded and went away. Six young Blackfeets arrived for tobacco which was given them and they went away. The men who went for meat yesterday arrived and tells us that twenty tents of Blackfeet have made a pound quite near the hunting tent and drove off every buffalo that our hunters are now quite at a loss where to go.

February 22, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before. Seven tents of Blackfeet arrived, six young men arrived for tobacco for another band, four tents of which arrived in the evening. Mr Isham arrived with sixty made beaver and a little fat. A Stone Indian also arrived for men to fetch furs.

February 23, Sunday. A light breeze westerly. Cloudy warm weather. Employed trading with the Indians of yesterday, part of which went away.

February 24, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent Mr Isham and two men with the Indian of Saturday, the rest of the men variously employed. The Blackfeets finished trading and went away. The two parties brought us 494 made beaver in wolves and small foxes but no provisions of any kind; indeed they complain of not being able to procure sufficient provision for their own families, there being a scarcity of buffalo everywhere owing principally to the amazing warmness of the winter.

February 25, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Sent one man to desire the hunters to remove near the river and endeavour to kill red deer etc., the rest variously employed.

February 26, Wednesday. Light airs NW clear warm weather. Men variously employed. The man who went away yesterday with one from the hunting tent and the hunter arrived.

February 27, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. Seven Blood Indians arrived for tobacco and brandy which they got and went away, also the hunter went away.

February 28, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Twelve tents of Blood Indians arrived with furs. Men variously employed.

March 1, Saturday. A fresh breeze NE cold weather with snow all day. Employed trading with the Indians who arrived yesterday.

March 2, Sunday. A light breeze northerly. Cloudy cold weather. The Indians of yesterday went away, they have brought wolves and small foxes to the amount of 1000 made beaver. A few Fall Indians arrived.

March 3, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. The Indians of yesterday traded and went away. Five Southerd Indians and a man who was tenting with them arrived from below, they talk of coming with their families to the house and going from hence to join a party who are assembling for war on the opposite side of the river, part of whom also arrived.

March 4, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed. A few Fall Indians arrived. Upwards of forty Blackfeets arrived with a few wolves etc.

March 5, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed. The Fall Indians of yesterday traded and went away. The Southerd Indians from below went away. We have endeavoured both by presents and persuasions to prevail with them to remain at least a little longer and kill beaver but, we are apprehensive, without success. The other Southerd Indians also went away. John Park and one man arrived from Nelson House. The Blackfeet of yesterday went away and three Fall Indians arrived.

March 6, Thursday. A fresh breeze SE part clear part cloudy weather. Men variously employed. Two men arrived from B.H. with a few store guns and letters from Messrs Howse, Hallett and Fidler. The hunter arrived for men to fetch the meat of ten bulls and returned with one man to his tent. The copy of a letter from Mr Joseph Howse.

Carleton House, February 9th 1800.

Dear Sir, You have doubtless been long in expectation of the return of the packet men and at a loss to conjecture the cause of their detention; you may perhaps be a little surprised when I inform you that Mr Hallet's people arrived during my absence from the house on an expedition down to Carrot River where I conceived my presence necessary to put our people in a train of doing something towards the recovery of the ground we have lost on the Cumberland House Station this fall from the unexpected retrenchment of men that has taken place, and by which we have already suffered severely in that quarter. I went accompanied by two men and William Walker; one of the former I left there as well as the latter, who I supposed might be serviceable in assisting to gain the Bungee debts. However on my

return after ten days absence (seven days after the arrival of the packet) I immediately dispatched a letter for him to come up again and I assure you no time has been lost in forwarding him to you.

It would give me singular pleasure could I realize your hopes in sending you favourable accounts from this place as a counterbalance to the deficiencies of the upper settlements, since I know how much you feel interested in the general prosperity of the Honourable Company's concerns and especially for this department which falls more immediately under your direction. I participate, Sir, of your anxiety, and without the power of alleviating feel equally with you the weight of those accumulated difficulties we are obliged to bear, the strength and extraordinary liberality or rather extravagance of our opponents, the sickness of many and the insolence of all the natives, and to complete the climax, the prospect of a want of provisions (with us as well as you); in a word every possible circumstance seems directly or indirectly to operate to our prejudice and to load us with reproaches for placing our reliance on resources so precarious as those of the Saskatchewan. The contemplation of the present naturally induces a train of ideas relative to the future and it were indeed some relief did these lead us to the anticipation of happier times; to the prospect of extending our grasp beyond its present too circumscribed limits and of acquiring to our Honourable masters a portion of the overflowings at least, of those springs from which one part of our opponents have hitherto derived their vital strength and that are now so equally sought for by the other. But even this consolation is denied us; entirely at the mercy of a capricious fortune it is our unhappy lot to experience every variety of disappointment and to endure every afflicting consequence that a continued series of the most vexatious and perplexing circumstances can impose in spite of our utmost endeavours to counteract them.

Our situation is painful and almost hopeless but however let not that dispirit us; let our energy increase with our difficulties; let our efforts become more strenuous as the urgency of events may require, so shall we have satisfaction of having at the least deserved that success which, someone has truly said, it is out of the power of man to command. I remain dear sir, yours etc., Joseph Howse.

March 7, Friday. A light breeze westerly clear fine weather. Men variously employed. The Southerd Indians of Wednesday last arrived with their families.

March 8, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent five men with

horses for meat, two digging a grave for an old man who was killed last night by the son of his own wife; in the evening we buried him. Sent one man to live with one of the Indians of yesterday, who we have prevailed on to go and hunt beaver, and take care of what he may kill.

March 9, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. Two Fall Indians arrived with a very few wolves which they traded and went away. The men who went for meat yesterday arrived. Sent Mr Isham and one man to fetch furs.

March 10, Monday. A light breeze westerly. Cloudy weather. Two men planing wood for canoes, and the rest variously employed. One of the Southerd Indians of Friday went away to join a war party on the opposite [side] of the river, the rest to hunt beaver. Sent a man with them to take care of what furs they may kill.

March 11, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Our hunter arrived for men to fetch meat. Mr Isham arrived with thirty-eight and a half made beaver in furs, men employed as before.

March 12, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Sent four men with horses for meat, the rest variously employed. We find it impossible to prevail with our hunter to continue any longer hunting, he says that there are no longer any animals, and that he wishes to join the war party.

March 13, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed. The men who went for meat yesterday with those who were at the hunting tent and the hunter's family etc. arrived with part of the meat of nine bull buffalo. Sent one man to Buckingham House with orders for Alexander Flett to come up here in order to pass the summer at Acton House.

March 14, Friday. A light breeze SE cloudy warm weather. Men variously employed.

March 15, Saturday. a.m. light airs easterly, p.m. a fresh gale northerly cloudy weather with showers of rain. Men variously employed. Paid our hunter for hunting and he went away.

March 16, Sunday. A fresh breeze NW a.m. cloudy p.m. clear.

March 17, Monday. A fresh breeze southerly clear weather. Men variously employed.

March 18, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

March 19, Wednesday. A fresh breeze easterly cloudy weather. Men variously employed. Several Canadians belonging to the two new companies set off with horses, carrying goods etc. towards the Sumer Berry River where they intend building canoes and proceeding from thence to the Athapuskaw so soon as the navigation opens. The want of a

guide to conduct them by the way of Cumberland reduces them to the necessity of taking this route, which from hence though a long way round is easy to be found, to get to a country on which all their hopes seems to be founded; as they find from experience that this river can afford little profits to new comers in particular and therefore only consider it as the key (from the provisions it furnishes and which they cannot do without) of more productive parts.

March 20, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

March 21, Friday. Wind and weather as before. A man arrived from Buckingham House. Men variously employed.

March 22, Saturday. A light breeze northerly clear weather. Men variously employed. Sent James Gaddy and one man with some Swampy Ground Stone Indians to fetch their furs.

March 23, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear warm weather. Sent Mr Isham and one man to the Southerd Indians' tents to fetch furs. James Gaddy arrived with six beaver.

March 24, Monday. A fresh gale NW with showers of rain. Boatbuilder caulking a boat, two men planing canoe wood, blacksmith making nails etc., one man taking care of the horses, and the rest of the men carrying firewood up the bank.

March 25, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW clear fine weather. Men variously employed. Mr Isham arrived with twelve made beaver.

March 26, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed.

March 27, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. Eight men employed tying up furs, the rest as before.

March 28, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Eight men employed pressing furs, the rest as before. Alexander Flett and two men arrived from Buckingham House, two men and an Indian also arrived from Red Deers Lake.

March 29, Saturday. Wind and weather as before. Sent Mr Sutherland with a man down to Buckingham House to remain there till Mr Hallett or Mr Pruden arrived, the rest of the men employed as yesterday. Two tents of Indians and one man who were living with them arrived.

March 30, Sunday. Light airs southerly, clear fine weather.

March 31, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Sent off Alexander Flett and three men to pass the summer at Acton House, also the two men and Indian from Red Deers Lake, one man assisting the boatbuilder, tailor making clothes, blacksmith making steels etc., one man taking care of the horses, and the rest tying up furs.

April 1, Tuesday. Light airs easterly clear fine weather. Six men employed packing furs, sent two with some free Canadians to fetch furs, and the rest employed as before.

April 2, Wednesday. A fresh breeze westerly fine weather. Men employed as before.

April 3, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same.

April 4, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed. A part of the river ice broke a little below.

April 5, Saturday. A fresh breeze NE cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

April 6, Sunday. A fresh breeze NE with snow.

April 7, Monday. A fresh breeze WNW. Clear weather. Men variously employed. Several Southerd Indians and a man who was living with them arrived. The river cleared of ice near us.

April 8, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. The men who went off on Tuesday last arrived but without any furs, having been unable from the rotten state of the ice to take their horses across Summer Berry River. One tent of Indians arrived from Red Deers Lake. An old Indian man was killed in the course of the day and a young man dangerously stabbed in three places at the tents about a quarter of a mile from the house where the Indians are still drinking.

April 9, Wednesday. A fresh gale westerly clear weather. Sent two men with horses to the free Canadians' tents, the rest variously employed. Brought the young Indian who was stabbed yesterday to the house as there are still hopes of his living, notwithstanding he has received three very large stabs a little below the shoulder bone, one of which is entirely through but fortunately a little below his heart and lungs.

April 10, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. Two tents of Indians and a man who was living with them arrived from Red Deers Lake.

April 11, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men variously employed.

April 12, Saturday. Light breezes westerly clear warm weather. Men employed as before.

April 13, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

April 14, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Carpenter, blacksmith, tailor and cooper employed at their respective duties. The rest of the men employed sewing a canoe.

April 15, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as yesterday. Three men, two of which are come for goods, arrived from Acton House, those tell us that the river is still froze over at that place and

the water so very low as to prevent there being a possibility of the boats coming down till it rises.

April 16, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men employed as before.

April 17, Thursday. A fresh breeze NW clear weather. Men employed as before. Launched two new boats and put them in the river. Two Indians and their families arrived with a few beaver, the men who went away the 9th instant arrived also with seventy made beaver. The two men who arrived on Tuesday set off on their return to Acton House, carrying powder and ball etc.

April 18, Friday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as yesterday. The copy of a letter sent to Mr Auld.

April 18th 1800.

Sir, According to your request I send you a man¹ who I think will be very capable of taking care of your house and settling with the Indians in the summer. I have also desired Mr Hallett to send you ten bags of pemmican which though unequal to your wants is all we can possibly spare. I feel myself too much interested in the success of your intended expedition to the Athapaskow not to render you every assistance in my power, for I assure you that it is with concern I have so long seen the Canadians alone in possession of that valuable country and quietly enriching themselves with its produce; but I am absolutely unable to supply you more amply as we have not near the quantity of dried provisions usually required. Two canoes will be delivered you at Bolsover House with whatever trading goods etc. may remain there which I hope will prove of service to you.²

I am sorry to say that I have no favourable accounts to give you of trade in this quarter. Owing to the amazing warmth of the winter, a scarcity of buffalo and other concurrent reasons, the Slave Indians have not killed near their usual quantity of furs, and the Southerd Indians also from a want of beaver and other causes have made very poor hunts. Consequently our trade must be much less than usual. I remain, Sir, with wishing you every success yours etc., James Bird.

April 19, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

¹ John Forbes (Forbest). See p. 230, n. 1; p. 244.

² Auld left Green Lake on 22 April to go to Bolsover House 'to bring round the 2 Canoes & the remains of Trading Goods'. On arrival there he found the ten bags 'of Pemican or Beat Meat & Fat' promised by James Bird. Auld was back at Green Lake post on 26 April. John Forbes arrived there from Buckingham House on 29 April 'to take charge . . . in the summer'. B.84/a/1.

April 20, Sunday. A fresh gale NW cloudy weather.

April 21, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Tradesmen employed at their respective duties, the rest of the men sewing a large canoe for carrying goods to the Stonney Mountain.¹ An Indian and his wife arrived from B.H.

April 22, Tuesday. A strong gale NW cloudy weather. Sent Mr Isham and two men in a canoe to Buckingham House, from whence they are to go to Red Deers Lake² and follow the Bungees who it is supposed intended going up the Summer Berry River. The rest of the men employed as yesterday.

April 23, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men employed as before.

April 24, Thursday. A fresh gale NW with snow. Men variously employed. Mr Pruden and two men arrived from B.H. Seven tents of Southerd Indians also arrived from thence.

April 25, Friday. A fresh breeze NW cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

April 26, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men's employ the same. The Indians of Thursday went across the river and encamped.

April 27, Sunday. A fresh gale westerly part clear part cloudy weather. The Indians went away.

April 28, Monday. A fresh breeze NE cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

April 29, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NE with snow. Men's employ the same.

April 30, Wednesday. A light breeze northerly, a.m. cloudy weather with snow p.m. clear. Sent Mr Pruden and two men with horses by land and five men in a large canoe with a few pieces of trading goods to build a house about half way between this and Acton House, where the Canadians also intend building. The rest of the men variously employed.

May 1, Thursday. A fresh breeze NW with cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

May 2, Friday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed sewing a canoe etc. etc.

May 3, Saturday. Wind and weather as before. Men's employ as yesterday.

¹ See pp. 212, 214, 234, 236.

² Greenwich House journal, 10 May 1800, 'At 9 a.m. Mr Isham, William Dunnett & James Hay arrived here from Buckingham House, who are to Summer here or follow the Bungees & Ottaways where they may go, as there are very few Beaver to be found about this place . . .'. 13 May 1800, 'Rain till Noon when I [Peter Fidler] gave the Charge of the House to Mr Isham & myself & 3 men Embarked for Buckingham House . . .'. B.104/a/1.

May 4, Sunday. Wind and weather as before. Hugh Sabeston and three men with horses carrying furs etc. arrived from Nelson House; they left Mr Pruden there making preparations to go and build about forty miles further up the river¹ where it is supposed the Southerd Indians will hunt next winter.

May 5, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed packing furs, putting timbers in canoes etc. etc.

May 6, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. Men employed as before.

May 7, Wednesday. A fresh breeze westerly clear weather. Men variously employed.

May 8, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

May 9, Friday. A fresh gale NW part clear part cloudy weather. Men variously employed, three men and Mr Pruden arrived.

May 10, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed.

May 11, Sunday. Wind and weather as before.

May 12, Monday. A fresh breeze NE with rain all day.

May 13, Tuesday. A fresh gale NW part clear part cloudy weather. Men variously employed.

May 14, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed. At 10 a.m. a canoe loaded with ten pieces of trading goods arrived from Buckingham House. Mr Hallett writes me that the water is so very low that he is not yet able to send off the boat with the rest of the goods remaining at Buckingham House. I therefore intend proceeding with the canoes alone to Gordon House. Late in the evening Gilbert Laughton and nine men in a boat and two parchment canoes carrying forty-six bundles of furs and eight bags of pemmican arrived from Acton House after a tedious passage of nine days owing to the amazing shallowness of the water. All their furs have been wet (as they broke their boat several times) but from their being timely dried have received no injury. The copy of a letter from Mr Auld.

Green Lake, 30th April 1800.

Dear Sir, I received your favour dated the 18th Instant per John

¹ David Thompson 'found the English encamped for building' at the mouth of Sturgeon Creek (Modeste Creek) on 7 May 1800. Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962), 'David Thompson's Itinerary in North-Western America, 1785-1812 [J. B. Tyrrell]', p. lxxxv; Tyrrell's 'Map of Northern Alberta . . .' (*supra*, p. 209, n. 2); *Gazetteer of Canada, Alberta* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1958), pp. 12, 59. The 'English' were therefore just below the site of the North West Company's future Quagmire Hall (see p. 214, n. 3).

Forbes¹ yesterday. I had received the ten bags of pemmican eight days before for which I most sincerely thank you; small as it is it will be of great service to us this ensuing summer I hope.

I am very sorry to find that you have not been so fortunate as formerly in the article of provision. If we had but thirty or forty bags more they would enable us to proceed with expedition and with confidence to a considerable distance but we must endeavour to do the best we can. Last summer my people went a whole month upon oatmeal and water through an unknown track with alacrity, and I would wish to leave nothing undone that might contribute to their faring better now.

I take the liberty to request of you a further supply for next year as provisions can be got at a much smaller expense than here.

I am sorry that your prospects of trade this year are so poor, but considering the causes you mention and the strong oppositions you have to contend with much cannot be expected from a country where every corner has been ransacked for furs during a great number of years.

For my own particular trade, it is small nor could it be expected to be great from Indians who have for near twenty years seen none but Canadians; the only consolation I have is, having paved the way for better success next season. I remain dear sir your most obedient servant, William Auld.

May 15, Thursday. Wind and weather as before. At 9 a.m. embarked with one canoe and two boats for Buckingham House. Left Mr Sutherland and Gilbert Laughton here to pack the Acton House furs and wait the arrival of Mr Hallett (who is to take charge of the house in the summer) and the boat with goods stores etc. from Buckingham House. At 7 p.m. encamped.

May 16, Friday. Wind and weather as before. At 3 a.m. embarked, at

¹ See p. 167, n. 3; p. 230, n. 1; p. 231, n. 1. Forbes (Forbest) was transferred to the Churchill Inland establishment as from season 1800-1 and was stationed under George Charles at the Green Lake post. In the spring of 1803 Forbes deserted 'to the Canadians' and was employed as a clerk and interpreter in the North West Company's English (Churchill) River department in 1804 and 1806-7. B.42/b/42, p. 47; B.42/b/43, p. 3; B.84/a/2, *passim*; B.42/f/1, fo. 3; B.42/a/128, 28 June 1803; Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), III, 948; W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 219. By 1810 Forbes was an innkeeper at or near the ferry house above the village of Ste Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. B.57/a/3, 17 September 1810; B.3/a/119^b, 6 March 1816. Nicholas Garry described the 'very picturesque' situation of this inn, kept by a former Hudson's Bay Company employee in 'Diary of Nicholas Garry . . . 1821' in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Section II, 1900, p. 92.

11 met the boat from Buckingham House on her way to Edmonton, at 7 p.m. encamped.

May 17, Saturday. Wind and weather as before. At 3 a.m. embarked and at 11 arrived at Buckingham House and found Mr Fidler just arriving from Red Deers Lake.¹ In the evening the boats arrived.

May 18, Sunday. A fresh breeze easterly clear weather. At 11 a.m. embarked with four canoes and at 7 p.m. encamped.

May 19, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked, paddled with a strong breeze in head till 7 p.m. then encamped.

May 20, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked, at 12 passed by Manchester House, and 6 p.m. encamped.

May 21, Wednesday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 6 arrived at Turtle River² where we found three canoes from Buckingham House. Took in the furs and pemmican made here and at 10 a.m. set off with the three canoes in company, paddled till 6 p.m. then encamped.

May 22, Thursday. A fresh gale SE clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 6 p.m. encamped. Great numbers of buffalo on the banks of the river.

May 23, Friday. A light breeze southerly clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, paddled and sailed till 6 p.m. then encamped. Killed one cow buffalo and several calves.

May 24, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped at the first rapid. Passed by a Canadian who informed us that a party of the new company's people had been fired upon by a large band of Fall Indians who were on a war excursion coming down the river, that one of their men had received five balls in different parts of his limbs and body, but that none of the wounds were likely to prove mortal though two of his ribs were broken.

May 25, Sunday. A fresh breeze SW clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, paddled, handed and sailed till 3 p.m. when we arrived at Carleton House. The Canadians who were attacked by the Fall Indians we now understand are a couple of men who were coming before the canoes in a small bateaux to shoot beaver, and having encamped on the south side of the river were surprised early in the morning by a scouting party of young men, fired on and wounded as above mentioned; they were afterwards taken prisoners

¹ After leaving Greenwich House in charge of Charles Isham, Fidler had set off on 13 May for Buckingham House. B.104/a/1. His 'Journal of the water communication between the Beaver and Saskatchewan Rivers, by the Moose Lake', which covers 15-17 May 1800 was entered (fos. 60d.-62) at a later date in E.3/2, one of the manuscripts he bequeathed to the Company (*supra*, p. xxix). See also *supra*, p. 205, n. 2; p. 206, n. 1; p. 207, n. 2.

² Henry Hallett's Somerset House.

by them and carried through the plains to the main body where the chiefs interceded for their lives and led them back again to the bank of the river, when the canoes fortunately appearing they delivered them to their masters with every outward appearance of sorrow for what happened, pleading by way of excuse the heat and inconsiderateness of young men who had alone been concerned in it, but principally that the Canadians had been mistaken for Indians (who they were in search of) from the number of dogs they had with them, the howling of which led them to the spot. They however thought proper to take all the guns the Canadians had with them (which were only three) save one, the principal part of their ammunition, tobacco and pemmican, and forced them to ferry them (160 men with an equal number of horses) to the north side of the river.

May 26, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 2 p.m. embarked and 7 p.m. encamped.

May 27, Tuesday. Wind and weather as before. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 8 p.m. encamped at the head of the S[t]urgeon River.

May 28, Wednesday. A fresh gale NW clear weather except from the smoke which almost obscures the sun. The country all round is on fire. At 3 a.m. embarked and at 4 p.m. arrived at Cumberland House.

May 29, Thursday. A fresh gale SW clear warm weather. Men employed repairing their canoes etc.

May 30, Friday. A fresh breeze NE clear weather. Men employed as yesterday.

May 31, Saturday. A fresh breeze northerly. Clear weather. At 12 p.m. embarked with thirteen canoes in company, paddled till 7 p.m. then encamped.

June 1, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly with showers of rain. At 3 a.m. embarked, paddled and sailed till 7 p.m. then encamped.

June 2, Monday. A fresh gale NW cloudy weather. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped in the Cedar Lake.

June 3, Tuesday. A fresh breeze SW clear weather. At 3 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped on the long carrying place.

June 4, Wednesday. A fresh breeze southerly clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, went down the rapid and sailed through the lake till 5 p.m. when the roughness of the water obliged us to put on shore.

June 5, Thursday. A fresh gale WNW. Cloudy weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, sailed till 12 when with difficulty we got on shore.

June 6, Friday. A light breeze westerly clear fine weather. At 2 a.m. embarked, paddled till 7 p.m. then encamped in Sea River. Passed four tents of Indians at the Play Green.

June 7, Saturday. A strong gale easterly with showers of rain. At 4 a.m. embarked, paddled and repaired beaver dams till 6 p.m. then encamped in Echewemamis.

June 8, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 3 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped on the White Fall.

June 9, Monday. A fresh gale SW part cloudy part clear weather with heavy showers of rain. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 6 p.m. encamped on Wippenapanis carrying place.

June 10, Tuesday. A strong gale westerly clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 11 arrived at Oxford House.¹

June 11, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NE cloudy cold weather. At 12 a.m. embarked and at 6 encamped on the Trout Fall.

June 12, Thursday. A fresh breeze NE with showers of snow. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped in the Knee Lake.

June 13, Friday. A fresh breeze easterly clear cold weather. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped in the Hill River.

June 14, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped at the Still Water. Met three canoes from Gordon House who inform us that the shoalness of the water has prevented more than two boats arriving at Gordon House, and that Mr Ballanden is not expected there for some time.

June 15, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 9 arrived at Gordon House. The amazing shallowness of the water with the small number of men at York Fort has it seems prevented any considerable quantity of goods being brought here and scarcely any provisions. I shall therefore be under the necessity of sending a part of the canoes to the factory.

June 16, Monday. Wind and weather as before. Employed fitting out eight canoes to return with goods to Oxford House, which from want of provisions we have some difficulty in doing.

June 17, Tuesday. Light breezes variable with rain in the evening. Fitted out eight canoes, loaded them with the goods that are here, and at 10 a.m. embarked with five canoes for York Fort, at 7 p.m. encamped in Steel River.

June 18, Wednesday. a.m. a fresh breeze westerly, p.m. a strong gale NE with showers of rain. At 3 a.m. embarked, sailed till 12 when we met Mr Ballanden with two large and one small boat lightly loaded on his

¹ According to William Sinclair's Oxford House journal (B.156/a/2), Bird was accompanied by Robert Longmoor. Sinclair had lived on 'nothing but fish every meal without either Bread, Butter or Vinegar' which was 'but very poor living, hardly fit to keep in the life'. B.239/b/64, fo. 16d. His trade returns amounted to 2414 made beaver. B.239/d/120, fo. 42d.

way to Gordon House; remained a couple of hours with him set off again and encamped on Rainbow Island.

June 19, Thursday. A fresh breeze northerly. Cloudy weather. At 7 a.m. embarked and at 10 arrived at York Factory.

June 20, Friday. A fresh breeze NE clear weather. Men employed getting necessities for the winter.

June 21, Saturday. A fresh breeze NE clear weather. Employed laying out cargoes for canoes etc.

June 22, Sunday. Wind and weather as yesterday.

June 23, Monday. A fresh breeze NE cloudy weather. At 9 a.m. embarked with three canoes loaded with trading goods and provisions for Gordon House. I am under the necessity of leaving two canoes (three of our men being very unwell) till those get better or more men arrive from North River. At 7 p.m. encamped at Pennycutway.

June 24, Tuesday. A fresh breeze NW with heavy rain in the afternoon. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 2 p.m. when the rain obliged us to put on shore.

June 25, Wednesday. A fresh breeze NW with showers of rain. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped in Steel River.

June 26, Thursday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear weather. At 4 a.m. embarked, tracked till 7 p.m. then encamped in Hill River. Met two boats and three canoes on their way to York Factory.

June 27, Friday. A fresh breeze westerly clear weather. One of our men having been taken violently ill in course of last night I am under the necessity of leaving one canoe here and proceeding on with two only. At 7 p.m. encamped.

June 28, Saturday. Wind and weather as yesterday. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 9 arrived at Gordon House. At 11 a.m. sent the men down to fetch up the other canoe. Eight canoes arrived with furs from Oxford House.

June 29, Sunday. A fresh breeze westerly with rain. Employed engaging men whose times expire etc.

June 30, Monday. A light breeze SE clear weather. Employed packing goods etc.

July 1, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Employed fitting out four canoes to embark tomorrow.

July 2, Wednesday. A fresh breeze westerly. Clear weather. Employed in fitting out the rest of the canoes etc. Four canoes went away.

July 3, Thursday. Light breezes variable with thunder and heavy showers of rain. Early a.m. four canoes went away and at 1 p.m. I embarked with four canoes and encamped on the second carrying place.

July 4, Friday. Light breezes NW cloudy weather with rain in the

evening. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 p.m. encamped, two canoes behind.

July 5, Saturday. Light breezes easterly. Clear weather. At 3 a.m. embarked and at 6 p.m. encamped.

July 6, Sunday. Light breezes easterly with rain. At 4 a.m. embarked and at 7 encamped in the Knee Lake where we found two of the canoes which had left Gordon House before us.

July 7, Monday. A fresh gale SW clear sultry weather. At 4 a.m. we set off and at 7 p.m. encamped near the Trout Fall. Here we overtook two more canoes, those we saw yesterday behind.

July 8, Tuesday. Early a.m. squalls of wind from the south with heavy thunder, lightning and rain, afterwards calm weather till 10 p.m. then a fresh breeze southerly with rain. At 5 a.m. embarked and at 3 p.m. arrived at Oxford House the two canoes in company.¹

¹ Bird and James Sutherland [3rd] left for Cumberland House on 14 July. B.156/a/2.

CHESTERFIELD HOUSE JOURNALS
1800-1802

JOURNAL OF PETER FIDLER

1800-1801

Chesterfield House, South Branch, Journal, 1800 and 1801.
Peter Fidler¹

1800

August 15, Friday. At 5 a.m. left Carlton House in company with Mr Bird and arrived at the mouth of the South Branch River at 3½ p.m. Parted with Mr Bird, he proceeding up the North Branch with two boats and five canoes, and we went up the South Branch with two boats and eighteen men to make a settlement at the junction of the Bad² and Red Deer's River; and as no survey have been made of this river before, therefore have taken the courses, distances, etc. etc. Indeed no European was ever up this before higher than forty miles above the old South Branch House that was destroyed by the Fall Indians in the summer of 1794. Went in the river SE½, WSW½ and put up at 5 p.m. Gave all hands ammunition and guns in case of an attack. Fresh breezes at SW clear, morning overcast.³

August 16, Saturday. Light airs at SE morning overcast, afternoon clear and hot; last night mosquitoes very troublesome. There have been the fewest of those troublesome insects this summer in general that has been

¹ A 'rough', shortened version of Fidler's entries from Wednesday, 6 August (when he left Cumberland House) to Thursday, 20 November 1800, some accounts, Indian vocabularies, and miscellaneous rough notes are in B.34/a/1. This document, acquired by the late Dr J. B. Tyrrell nearly sixty years ago from Mr George Ray, then in charge at York Factory, was returned to the Company in 1952. Fidler also revised the entries from 15 August to 24 September 1800 and entitled them 'Journal from the mouth of the *South Branch* of the Saskatchewan River to the confluence of the Bad & Red Deer's Rivers, where Chesterfield House is situated'. This revised journal is in E.3/2 (pp. 122-41), one of the four books bequeathed to the Company by Fidler. See p. xxix. Fidler included five untitled maps, originally drawn at Chesterfield House, in E.3/2. They are: (1) 'Drawn by Ak ko wee ak a Black Foot Indian 1802' on p. 204; (2) 'Drawn by the Feathers, or Ak ko mock ki, a Black foot Chief 1802 Feby.' on p. 205; (3) 'Drawn by Ki oo cus or the Little Bear a Blackfoot Chief 1802' on pp. 206-7; (4) a census of Indian 'Tents' showing their locations, on pp. 208-9; and (5) a similar map to (4) 'Drawn by the Feathers or Ac ko mok ki a Black foot Chief 7th Feby. 1801' on pp. 210-11. Another version of (5) is classified G.1/25 and is entitled 'An Indian Map of the Different Tribes that inhabit on the East & West Side of the Rocky Mountains with all the rivers & other remarkable places, also the number of Tents &c. . . reduced ¼ from the Original Size by Peter Fidler'. This is reproduced in *The American Heritage Book of Indians* (New York, 1961), pp. 324-5. Rough versions of maps (3), (1) and (2) above are in Fidler's rough Chesterfield House journal for 1801-2, B.39/a/2, fos. 85d.-86, 92d., 93.

² South Saskatchewan. E.3/2, pp. 206-7.

³ Fidler's other versions of this entry in B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 between them provide additional information about the ammunition served out and the destruction of South Branch House. They also mention the '4 Muskettoons belonging to the Boats' and a note being left for 'the French master' at the camping place.

for these many years past, owing to the dry weather. At 4.55 a.m. got underway tracked on N side SSW $\frac{1}{2}$ a small rapid, ESE $\frac{1}{2}$, NNE $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{8}$ a strong rapid, SWbW $\frac{1}{4}$, SEbS $\frac{1}{2}$, SSW $\frac{1}{4}$ a small rapid, WNW $\frac{1}{8}$, SbW $\frac{1}{4}$, SEbE $\frac{1}{4}$, SSW $\frac{1}{4}$, WNW $\frac{1}{8}$, all below this high steep bare banks, strong current, with good pines etc. NNW $\frac{1}{4}$ a shoal strong rapid, WbW $\frac{1}{4}$, SWbS $\frac{1}{4}$ a small gravel island on the south side and easy current, WSW $\frac{3}{4}$ a stony point on N side with a strong shoot of current. S $\frac{1}{4}$, WbS $\frac{1}{2}$, SE $\frac{1}{2}$ easier current, low banks and wood growing near the edge of the water. SSW $\frac{1}{2}$, SbE $\frac{1}{2}$, WbN $\frac{1}{2}$, strong current stony and shoal, SbW $\frac{1}{4}$ woods close to the water's edge on the N side and a short distance bad tracking WbS $\frac{3}{4}$, NWbW $\frac{1}{2}$, NWbN $\frac{1}{2}$, WbS $\frac{1}{4}$ all easy current and fine low banks, a small willow and gravel island, went on the S Side which is but bad. NW $\frac{1}{2}$ a small piece of barren ground N side and put up at 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ p.m. Pines, poplar and birch intermixed, but the pines are smaller than lower down the river, a willow and stony island opposite where we slept.¹

August 17, Sunday. At 5 a.m. got off. Tracked on N side, SW $\frac{1}{2}$, WbS $\frac{3}{4}$, NNW $\frac{3}{4}$ small stony island and high steep bare bank on the north side. SWbS $\frac{3}{4}$ two strong, stony points SEbS $\frac{1}{2}$ a shoot of current and a fine spot of barren ground N side, SSW $\frac{1}{4}$, WSW $\frac{1}{2}$ very strong current, ESE $\frac{1}{2}$, SSW $\frac{1}{4}$, WSW $\frac{1}{4}$, SSW $\frac{1}{4}$ two small willow islands. WbS $\frac{1}{4}$ fine barren knolls on the N side SW $\frac{1}{2}$ and stopped for rain at 10 $\frac{2}{3}$, and rain over and got off again at 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ and sailed SSE $\frac{1}{2}$ a large poplar island where three Canadian houses was built fall 1795.² Went on the south side the island, little or no water on the N side. S $\frac{1}{2}$, SWbW $\frac{1}{2}$, SSE $\frac{3}{4}$ a small creek on the south side, SbW $\frac{3}{4}$ a small bit of barren ground on S side, the first seen as yet on that side. WbS $\frac{1}{4}$ and put out the tracking line and went on N side NWbN $\frac{1}{2}$, a small willow island on the north side, stony and bad and a stony bad point on south side. The north side the best tracking up of the two. W $\frac{1}{4}$ and put up at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. Saw a bull buffalo the first we have seen as yet. Not a single pine tree to be seen this day, mostly all small poplars and birch. Light airs in the morning and cloudy. Middle of the day rain. Evening strong gale at N.³

August 18, Monday. At 5 a.m. got underway, tracked on the north side NWbN $\frac{1}{3}$, WSW $\frac{1}{3}$, SW $\frac{1}{2}$, NNW $\frac{1}{2}$, WbS $\frac{1}{2}$ and crossed to the other side. WSW $\frac{1}{4}$ a poplar island south side.⁴ SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$ and came to the head of the

¹ The directions above are almost the same as those in B.34/a/1, but they differ considerably from those in the E.3/2 version.

² 'but left the following Spring'. E.3/2, p. 123.

³ The B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 versions vary, but the general directions are the same.

⁴ At this point in the E.3/2 version (written later) Fidler inserted: 'and old French House here built about 1784 called Fort De Lislee on South side now not any part of the House to be seen only a part of the Beaver Press. Just above on the North side a Canadian House built by Mr Belleau a Canadian 1801 in the Fall'. Nothing else is added. The B.34/a/1 version is limited to directions.

poplar island, this reach several small islands in it, river only $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide full of sand-banks and shoals.

DM alt. \odot LL	$\begin{array}{r} \circ \quad ' \quad '' \\ 99 \quad 35 \quad 15 \\ - \quad \quad \quad 15 \\ \hline 99 \quad 35 \quad 0 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} \circ \quad ' \quad '' \\ 52 \quad 59 \quad 20 \end{array}$
		Latitude

This observation taken on the north side the river opposite to the head of the large poplar island. Then went SSE $\frac{1}{2}$ a high point on the south side, sailed amongst the islands below as there is no tracking there. Tracked on south side along a steep high bank ESE $\frac{1}{4}$ and put up at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. Fresh breezes at SE, clear fine weather. Killed several buffalo but only found cows late in the evening.

August 19, Tuesday. Fresh breezes at SE overcast, afternoon clear and pretty warm. At 4.50 got underway and tracked on different sides the river and sailed sometimes. SE $\frac{1}{2}$ a poplar island on south side, WSW $\frac{1}{2}$, SbW $\frac{1}{2}$, WbS $\frac{3}{4}$, fine low, barren ground on north side, SbW $\frac{1}{2}$ a poplar island and went on the south side it SSW $\frac{1}{2}$, NNW $\frac{3}{4}$, SWbW $\frac{1}{2}$, NWbW $\frac{3}{4}$, SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$, WNW $\frac{3}{4}$, SSW $\frac{1}{2}$ barren hills on N side and the pines opposite the South Branch House appears SSE $\frac{1}{2}$ and passed the old South Branch House¹ that was burnt down by the Fall Indians after plundering it in June 1794. SSE $\frac{3}{4}$, SWbW $\frac{1}{2}$ a small willow island on the S side, S $\frac{1}{2}$ a creek S side and a few pines. SSW $\frac{1}{4}$ and put up at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. Millions of grasshoppers all along from the old house.²

August 20, Wednesday. At 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got underway, sailed a little and tracked on different sides the river till 6 p.m. and put up on the north side. S $\frac{1}{4}$, SEbS $\frac{1}{2}$ fine steep bank and barren ground on the south side SSW $\frac{3}{4}$ do., SbW $\frac{1}{2}$, WSW $\frac{1}{2}$ fine low barren ground points on the SS. SbE $\frac{3}{4}$ a stony and grass island and a small poplar island on the south side. SE $\frac{3}{4}$, ESE $\frac{1}{2}$, EbN $\frac{1}{2}$ high steep bare bank S side* and a parallel ridge of stones quite round the bay about half way up, bank forty yards high perpendicular, SSW $\frac{3}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{2}$, SWbS $\frac{3}{4}$, ESE $\frac{1}{2}$ high steep bare bank on S side, SSW $\frac{1}{2}$,

¹ At this point in the E.3/2 version Fidler inserted: 'built by Magnus Twatt & Mr William Walker in 1786'. He then included his astronomical observations made on 16 May 1801 on the return journey. These will be found *infra*, p. 290. Following the astronomical observations in the E.3/2 version Fidler wrote, '... stopped here from 1 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. & collected a few nails from the old Houses Tracked on N side (the House is on the same side)'.

² This part of the E.3/2 entry reads: '... all the way from the South Branch house to where we put up being in many places 3 or 4 deep all alive. I walked along shore & in places they were so very numerous that they darkened the air. I wintered at this House from 22d Decr. 1789 to 4 June 1790, it has never been reestablished since the melancholy catastrophe in 1794'.

SEbS $\frac{1}{4}$, SSW $\frac{1}{2}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ a little stony island on the north side. SE $\frac{1}{2}$ fine barren ground these eight reaches past on both sides, sandy ground on N side with high banks. *After this mark insert SbE $\frac{1}{2}$ a small poplar island on NS, ESE $\frac{3}{4}$ high steep bare bank on SS and a fine low barren ground point N side and then comes the parallel ridge of stones etc. Fresh breezes at NW with rain in the forenoon. Afternoon clear and nearly calm. Much barren ground on both sides the river this day with very little woods and that small poplar. Ground particularly on the N side much wormwood growing. Saw many buffalo but killed none.¹

August 21, Thursday. Light airs at SW clear and hot with a shower of rain in the afternoon and middling breezes at SE. At 4.50 got underway SbW $\frac{1}{2}$, SEbS $\frac{1}{2}$ bad shoal stony point S side. SbE $\frac{1}{2}$ a small willow island on the south side, SSW $\frac{1}{2}$ a deep creek on the S side but no water in it, 300 yards above the creek on same side.

DM alt. ○ LL	° ' "	
	98 29 —	
	— 15	
	<u>98 28 45</u>	Latitude 52 33 7.

SSW $\frac{1}{2}$, SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$, SbW $\frac{1}{2}$ small woods all along on south side, at the head of the last reach a very high steep bare bank S side. Put up at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.m., went on hunting several times and killed several buffalo. The end of the woods where we put up not a single tree or shrub of any kind growing above the bank, and entire open country. Several hummocks of woods on N side below in this day's work. Strong current yesterday in the afternoon and all this day, pretty good tracking.² As we are before any of the Canadian traders we mean to stop for them and proceed in company in case any Indians may be seen; as we don't know what natives may be along the river, and perhaps behave in a hostile manner to us. Every man has his gun and ammunition by his side all night in case of a surprisal from any Indians.³

August 22, Friday. Calm and hot, afternoon fresh breezes at SW. Went up the river to where the buffalo are plentiful, SEbS $\frac{1}{2}$, SWbW $\frac{1}{2}$, SbW $\frac{1}{2}$. Killed three cows.

¹ The other versions mention Ben Bruce and William Park being unsuccessful at hunting.

² Both the B.34/a/1 version and the E.3/2 later version follow with references to grasshoppers. The reference in the latter MS reads: 'Vast numbers of Grasshoppers on both sides of the river, they are now copulating. The following year we passed up this way very few or any of those Insects to be seen'.

³ In B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 references to waiting for the Canadians are included in the entries for 22 August.

August 23, Saturday. Rain from 8 a.m. till 2 p.m. Proceeded a little more forwards. Went SEbS $2\frac{1}{2}$.¹ Calm evening fresh breezes at SE. Yesterday

DM alt. ☉ LL	$\begin{array}{r} \circ \quad ' \quad '' \\ 97 \ 57 \ 0 \\ + \quad \quad 35 \text{ [sic]} \\ \hline 97 \ 57 \ 37 \end{array}$	Latitude 52 28 29.
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This observation taken before we started yesterday.² Killed one buffalo.

August 24, Sunday. Heavy rain all day from 5 a.m. on, continued nearly all night. Fresh gales at NE in the evening veered to the NW.³

August 25, Monday. Fresh breezes at NE with flying showers of rain. Split and dried the meat of two buffalo, no buffalo near us.

August 26, Tuesday. Light breezes at WNW clear fine weather. At 7 a.m. got underway. Tracking on the N side, these days past have tracked on the other side. W₁, SSW₂, SbE₁, S₁ a deep gully on S side and a small round hill opposite to us on the same side the gully within two or three miles of the river, SWbS $\frac{1}{2}$ and put up. Killed one buffalo.⁴

August 27, Wednesday. At 6 a.m. got underway, went WSW₁, SSW₁. Killed seven buffalo, crossed the river to the S side to a heap of drift-wood and began to split and dry it.⁵ Light breezes and variable thick smoky air and very hot.⁶

August 28, Thursday. Fresh breezes at SE⁷ clear and hot, evening fresh gales at NE with heavy thunder, lightning and rain. Employed splitting and drying the meat.

¹ In E.3/2 Fidler inserted at this point, '& put up on the same side at a pretty large Hammock of Poplars in a deep gully, a great number of Tent places (old) here'. The B.34/a/1 version mentions the old tent places as being on the 'SS' i.e. south side.

² This remark agrees with the entry in B.34/a/1, but in the E.3/2 later version Fidler stated that the observation was taken before they started travelling on the 23rd and added, 'Perhaps the other observations before this, in this river should be taken, the error of 37" + instead of 15" -'.

³ The E.3/2 version adds: 'our Tents being below the bank quite overflowed them . . . all our men always sleep in the Boats except myself, Oman Norquay & Benjn. Bruce'.

⁴ The entries in B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 give more directions for this day's journey, which apparently totalled 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles before Fidler and his men camped on the north side. On the 25th and 26th notes were left at his camping places urging the 'French' to hurry and catch up his party.

⁵ The other versions make it clear that there were no trees on the north side and that Fidler crossed to the south side to 'a small hammock of Poplars' for the purpose of splitting and drying the buffalo meat. Of the buffalo killed Fidler accounted for four (three cows and one bull) and Benjamin Bruce for three cows.

⁶ Fidler, in the E.3/2 version, remarked, 'a steep bank & rather wet just above where we stopt, & drift wood & rather stony where we put up at 3 P.M. . . . several old Traps up the bank made of Stones, for killing small foxes made by Indians, many years ago . . . '.

⁷ SW in other versions.

DM alt. \odot LL	$\begin{array}{r} 0 \quad ' \quad '' \\ 94 \quad 15 \quad 15 \\ + \quad \quad 30 \\ \hline 94 \quad 15 \quad 45 \end{array}$	Latitude 52 14 52.
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August 29, Friday. Light airs and variable clear hot weather. Finished drying the meat ready to embark tomorrow. This dry meat will be very serviceable when we arrive at the place we intend to build at, particularly should no Indians visit us soon after and the buffalo perhaps may be few there too.

August 30, Saturday. A hill on S side runs parallel with the river about 4 or 5 miles within and the small round hill mentioned 26th instant bears from this NEbN. At 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ a.m. got underway. Tracked on different sides. S₁, WSW₁ $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{2}$, SbW $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{2}$. These four last reaches a little wood all along under the bank with wet springy ground on S side. WbN₁ a deep creek N side with a few willows growing in it but not a drop of water, near SSW₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ high steep bare banks on the north side, ESE₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ near SSW₂ and put up at 2 p.m., it rained fast. Strong gales at south and kept veering to NW a very thick smoky air, could scarce see across the river.¹

August 31, Sunday. At 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got underway. Tracked on N side as usual near WbS₁, near SSW₃, small woods (poplar) in the face of the bank on south side all along. WbN $\frac{1}{2}$, S₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ high drift of sand north side² and the ground is quite different from before. SSW₁ river $\frac{1}{3}$ mile wide, a poplar island³ $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long but no water on the N side. Here the tracking is at an

¹ The versions in B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 vary somewhat. The only additional information they give is that before leaving on the 30th Fidler left another note for the Canadians and that his camp-site for that night was on the north side of the river.

² The B.34/a/1 version of the entry for 31 August is not very full and adds nothing to the above remarks, but at this point in the E.3/2 version Fidler describes the 'herbage & small bushes' on the sandy knolls which extended along the river for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. He continued, 'within fine level barren ground great numbers of Tent Places here & also in several places below where we have gone up the Bank being distinguished either by some few old fragments of wood, fireplaces or a round circle of Stones that are put up on the bottom edges of their Tents to prevent the winds blowing them down. Pegs are used when they have them in preference'. Fidler then inserted in the E.3/2 version the astronomical observations which he made in this area (near modern Saskatoon) on his return journey. He also, on the return journey, gave an account of the weather conditions then prevailing. The astronomical observations will be found *infra*, p. 290, in the entry for 12 May 1801, and the remarks about the weather on p. 290, n. 1.

³ The E.3/2 version continues in part, 'called the Snake Island near the South Shore, here the *Moose Woods* commence upon both sides of the river being nothing else but small Poplars willows &c on the South side they extend a good way from the river, but on the north side never above 2 miles. Tracked now on the South side, which is very indifferent bad bank & woods. A high Drift of Sand at the lower end of the Snake Island & no water now betwixt it & the north shore. The end of the Tracking may be said to end here until above these woods on account of the bad banks & the woods growing close to the waters edge & steep'.

end and the beginning of what is called the *Moose Woods*. S₁, SbE₃ all sandy hills south side, SSE₂ very uneven ground on the S side. S₂, SSW₁ a deep large creek on S side comes from the ESE, little water in it.¹ WbN₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ across the valley which is better than two miles from main bank to main bank, all the other space is full of middling sized poplars and willows on both side the river. S₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ and put up at 5 p.m. in the middle nearly of the *Moose Woods*. River wide and full of sands since we entered the *Moose Woods*. Killed two buffalo and one red deer. Thick, smoky air still continues occasioned by the grass being on fire. Sailed most part of the way from the end of the tracking. Fresh gales NW clear.²

September 1, Monday. Light breezes at west smoky air and hot. Killed two cows.³

September 2, Tuesday. Fresh breezes at NE clear and the smoke all cleared away. Went SSW₁, ESE $\frac{1}{2}$, EbN₁, ESE $\frac{3}{4}$ and put up on the north side to split and dry meat. Killed three buffalo, they are very plentiful here.⁴ A great number of prickles growing in bushes of about 50 or 100 in a heap, one of which contains at least 150 long picks about from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch long and upwards about the size and shape of a small sewing needle, not any of these kind of things are found below, nor not a single one have been seen by any of our people in any part where houses have been established. It is very dangerous to walk in the barren ground with Indian shoes on unless good notice is taken where a person puts down his foot. On and near sandy hills they are the most plentiful and they are never observed to grow on the north side of any declivity but always on the south side with some few upon level places. I have observed several of these kind of prickles on my return from the *Stony Mountain* in 1793 near the *Red Deers River* but nowhere else in all that journey.

September 3, Wednesday. Strong breezes at S clear and hot weather.

¹ The E.3/2 version of this day's entry names this *Beaver Creek* and continues: 'this Creek is entirely full of Beaver as for the distance of 4 miles up the Creek there are Beaver Dams at almost every 20 or 40 yards & all the Poplars are cut down, not a single one standing for a good distance on either side, of Late on account of the grater part of the woods being cut down by them they are the principal part of them either dead or have left it for a more plentiful place of food. Mr Bellew killed himself the following Spring 64 Beavers in it in 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ days'.

² In his E.3/2 version Fidler not only gave fuller directions and longer descriptions of the country, but mentioned that at the camping place for the night of 31 August they found 'the Skeleton of a Parchment canoe used by some Inds. above to cross the river'. He also said that while tracking along the sandy knolls on the north shore he saw 'the first *Prickles* . . . yet seen', and commented that they were 'the same as those mentioned being seen at *Red Deers River*' when returning 'from the *Rocky Mountain* the 21st Feby. 1793'. Fidler's 1793 description (*ibid.*, p. 62) of this common Alberta cactus (*opuntia polycantha*) is the earliest known.

³ According to the B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 versions, which are both slightly longer, Fidler was waiting for the Canadians to catch up with him.

⁴ Fidler's entries in the other versions vary slightly and end at this point.

Employed splitting and drying meat. In the evening a strange dog came to us and as we were at a thick point of willows and some poplars we dropped down the current to a point of a large flat sand about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and anchored the boats out in the river, and all hands lay under arms all night, in case the Indians should come upon us with any bad intention.

	° ' "	
DM alt. ☉ LL	90 34 45	
	+ 30	
	90 35 15	Latitude 51 54 57.

September 4, Thursday. As we neither saw, or heard anything all night, concluded that the dog had been lost some time ago. At $6\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got underway having finished splitting and drying our meat. A strong sail wind, went SSW₁, ESE₂, S₁, ESE_{1½}, SSE₁ a fine low plain S side full of buffalo, a steep bank all the way along the plain. Killed five cows which detained us $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours. SW₂ and came to the upper end of the Moose Woods, a stony and steep bank N side, a small ledge of small poplars $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile within on N side, S_{1½} small creek N side, S_{1½} end of the woods on S side, SWbS₃, SWbW₃, SSW₄ and put up on N side at $6\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. Not a single stick of wood to be seen on either side the river, an entire plain.¹

September 5, Friday. Rain with light breezes at north from 4 a.m. till noon, then dry but continued cloudy and cold. At $1\frac{3}{4}$ p.m. got underway. Tracked on S side SWbS_{1½}, SbW_{2½}, SbE_{1½} a steep bare bank of black earth on the south side. Put up on the north side at a small hummock of maple under the bank and to lay by for the Canadians a few days as we suppose they cannot be far off if they intend to send people to build up this river.²

September 6, Saturday. Heavy rain from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m., in the morning fresh breezes at SSE.³

September 7, Sunday. Strong breezes at NW, cold cloudy weather. Another strange dog came to us that has been lost some time by his being so very poor.⁴

September 8, Monday. Light breezes at SSE with rain from 6 a.m. until 3 p.m.

¹ The entries in B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 give longer descriptions of the country.

² The remarks about the Canadians were omitted from the other versions of this entry which mention that the lack of firewood caused Fidler to move forward, and that two cow buffalo were killed.

³ The E.3/2 version adds: 'our men taking ash for ax helves as there is good wood of that sort here'.

⁴ The E.3/2 version mentions large bears being in the vicinity.

September 9, Tuesday. As the Canadians have not made their appearance yet, after waiting nearly thirteen days for them we mean to proceed forwards and build before the winter sets in as we suppose that we shall be nearly twenty days before we arrive at the confluence of the Bad and Red Deers Rivers where we are to build. At 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ a.m. got underway. Went SbE2 a deep gully on N side, SbE4 a large sand plain on south side, and a creek on N side but no water in it.

	°	'	"	
DM alt. ⊙ LL	87	3	45	
	+	30		
	87	4	15	Latitude 51 25 47.

E3 fine level fine point on N side. Fresh breezes at south overcast and cold. A large view within on south side where we put up. Above the bank river very full of sands, about from 3 to 400 yards wide from bank to bank, very few stones in it, sometimes track upon one side, then the other, and frequently along sands in the middle of the river. Not a single stick of woods of any kind to be seen above the bank on either side the river, and frequently we are at a loss to pick up as much driftwood along shore as will cook our kettle in the evening.¹

September 10, Wednesday. Fresh breezes at south clear and cold. At 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ a.m. got underway. SSE4 in which are three small stony islands near the north shore, EbS2, SE3 a fine creek on N side and a smaller one on south side where we put up. Killed four cows and one red deer. Several small hummocks yesterday and this day *under* the bank, principally upon the north side the river.²

September 11, Thursday. At 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got underway. Went SSE2, SEbS4, ESE5 two islands in this last reach one nearly one mile long with a few poplars and willows. River here nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide at the island. EbN1 the elbow of river³ and put up, a low valley on south side with a few scrubby small trees growing close to the water's edge. A high drift of sand on the north side below the bank.

¹ The information in the B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 versions of this entry gives fuller descriptions of the country and mentions that although some herds of buffalo came down the bank and very nearly ran over the camp-site, none was killed.

² The B.34/a/1 version is slightly longer. The E.3/2 version gives a fuller description of the country and mentions that red deer were plentiful wherever there were 'small woods of any kind'.

³ The Elbow (Township 26, Range 5, West of the Third Meridian), just west of the village of Elbow, Saskatchewan. *Gazetteer of Canada, Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, Canadian Board on Geographical Names, 1957), p. 25.

DM alt. Aquilae $\begin{array}{r} \circ \quad ' \quad '' \\ 94 \ 30 \ 0 \\ + \quad \quad 30 \\ \hline 94 \ 30 \ 30 \end{array}$ Latitude $51 \ 6 \ 28$.

Killed one red deer.¹

September 12, Friday. Strong gales at west clear, afternoon cloudy and cold. At $7\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got off, went SbW1 and SWbS1.

DM alt. \odot LL $\begin{array}{r} \circ \quad ' \quad '' \\ 85 \ 30 \ 0 \\ + \quad \quad 30 \\ \hline 85 \ 30 \ 30 \end{array}$ Latitude $51 \ 4 \ 13$

D alt. \odot LL

H	'	''	\circ	'	''
10	47	46	81	23	0
	48	31		28	30
	49	18		34	0
22	48	32	81	28	30
+	4	49	+		30
22	53	21	81	29	0
\odot UL					
10	50	7	82	44	15
	51	0		49	45
	51	51		55	45
22	50	59	82	49	55
+	4	52	+		30
22	55	51	82	50	25

\oslash & \odot s NL

H	'	''	\circ	'	''
10	55	9	73	7	15
	56	24		7	0
	57	5		6	15
	57	58		6	0
	58	45		5	45
	59	36		5	15
11	0	24		5	0
	1	11		4	45
	2	3		4	30
	2	53		4	0
22	59	9	73	5	35
+	4	51	+		30
23	4	0	73	6	5

¹ The directions and descriptions in the other versions of this entry are longer, but add nothing of particular interest.

H & Os NL					
H	'	"	°	'	"
o	1	16	72	39	30
	2	16		39	15
	3	5		39	0
	3	46		38	45
	4	34		38	30
	5	13		38	0
	5	56		38	0
	6	39		37	30
	7	28		37	30
	8	29		37	0
o	4	53	72	38	18
+	4	50	+		30
o	9	43	72	38	48

[In margin: Fahrenheits thermr. 55+]

Where the altitude of Aquilae was taken last night bears from this place¹ N½E about 2¼ miles, taken on south side the river. Light airs and variable *yesterday* hot weather, with thunder, lightning and rain from 7 p.m. till 11 p.m. Got off again and went SWbS₃ mostly all sandy banks on the north side a small poplar island, SWbW₃ a middling hummock of wood, close to the river on the north side the only one seen so large since we left the Moose Woods. Very hilly and holey ground on the north side covered with a kind of heath. Killed one buffalo, very few to be seen.²

September 13, Saturday. Got off at 6½ a.m. and went SWbW₂, SWbS_{1½}, SbW₄ a good hummock of woods on a low point in the river on the north side. SW₂, S₁ high steep bare banks on N side with small pieces of alabaster. Light breezes at NW clear and warm, a thick fog in the morning and cold. Very hilly and holey on the N side this last reach.

¹ Until 1925 the astronomical day started at noon. The figures in heavier type in the above astronomical observations taken on 12 September (civil day) or 11–12 September (astronomical day) have been supplied from the later version of Fidler's journal, E.3/2, to fill the blank spaces in the manuscript journal B.34/a/2. In E.3/2, where additional astronomical information is given, the longitude is shown as '105.44¼ query' at astronomical time 23 hours, 4 minutes on 11 September (i.e. 11.04 a.m., 12 September) and as '105.51¼ query' at astronomical time 0 hours, 9 minutes, 43 seconds on 12 September (i.e. 12.09 p.m., 12 September).

² The B.34/a/1 version adds nothing. The E.3/2 version gives more description of the country and begins, 'A little above our Tent an old Bull came down the Bank in to a puddle near the river about 6 Inches deep & he kept walking round & round in a small circle as if he had been light headed & kept so till we passed him above ½ mile before he left off when he went away, altho we passed within 100 yards of him, this is the first sight of any thing of the kind'.

	° ' "	
DM alt. Aquilae	94 58 30	
	+ 30	
	<u>94 59 0</u>	Latitude 50 50 58.

Killed two cows and one bear.¹

September 14, Sunday. Kept two men on the watch all last night and intend to keep a constant watch every night until we arrive at our winter's quarters. Fresh breezes at south clear weather. At 10 a.m. got underway and went ESE₂ a good point of poplar on the point on the north side and a large sandy bay on the south side.² SSW₂ and put up, went on hunting and killed nine cows and one red deer. A pretty high hill at the head of this reach about two miles off runs ESE and WNW, direct across the river, vast numbers of buffalo, and in general they are all crossing from the south to the north side the river. Also great numbers of red deer on the N side, wherever there is a hummock of small woods under the bank great plenty of the latter animals are to be seen.³

September 15, Monday. Fresh breezes at W clear fine weather. At 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ a.m. got underway. Went SSW₂, SWbW₃, WNW₃, these two last reaches a fine low bottom near the river on the south side and a creek with the most water in it we have seen yet. WSW₁ $\frac{1}{2}$ a few straggling poplars on N side, SWbS₃ and put up at 6 p.m. Afternoon cold cloudy weather with fresh breezes at N, sailed a little in the evening. Not a stick of wood on either side, Killed two cows.⁴

¹ The B.34/a/1 version adds nothing of interest. The longer version in E.3/2 includes the following: '... Killed a black bear, he chased a heard of Buffalo into the river, & followed them close while swimming & before they was just ready to Land he cut the Sinnews of Both hind Legs of a young Bull, & before we could get opposite to him which was only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of he had already skinned a considerable part of the Back & eat some also, when we fired & killed him ... As we are now pretty high up the Country & in dayly expectations of seeing some Indians, we began to keep a regular watch 2 men alternately one in each Boat for 3 hours each, the whole night, having all our Arms & Ammunition ready, hitherto we have kept no regular watch'.

² At this point in the E.3/2 version Fidler continued: 'here on this point on the North side on our return down here in the Spring, just at the back of the woods at the edge of the Barren ground, we found 7 Skulls of upgrown people, all whole, and entire except one which was broken in a hole on one side, the principal part of the teeth was all fallen out, & the skulls, being as white as snow, by exposure to the severe colds & snow in the winter, we also found close by the fragments of a little wood & some small roggans [containers] of both wood & Buffalo horn, also in the Ashes in one old fireplace found the blade of one of our women's Knives, a good deal rusty, there has been 5 Tents here, we also saw the principal part of the bones of one about 8 years old by their size. These people have either been killed by an Enemy, or else cut off by the Small pox in the fall 1781, & the appearances of the different things we saw to have been at or near that time. . .'. See *H.B.R.S.*, XV.

³ The E.3/2 version also mentions that the animals were killed by Fidler (6 cows), Robert Budge (1 cow and 1 red deer), and Benjamin Bruce (2 cows). The B.34/a/1 version adds nothing more.

⁴ The other versions, both slightly longer, add nothing of importance. Fidler shot the buffalo.

September 16, Tuesday. Rain in the night and this morning. At 8 a.m. got underway. Sailed SWbS₃ a nice bushy poplar island on the south side, stopped from 10 to 2 for rain. W₄ a small poplar island, put up at 5½ p.m. Very uneven ground particularly on the south side, no buffalo or red deer to be seen.¹

September 17, Wednesday. At 7 a.m. got underway. Tracked on different sides a little and upon sands SbW₄ very hilly and holey bank on both sides, a small barren ground island in this reach near the south shore, also some large poplars in the reach. SW₂ high banks N side and no grass and two remarkable high hills on N side and a flat low bottom on the south side.

DM alt. ☉ LL	82	31	15	
	+		30	
	<u>82</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>45</u>	Latitude 50 37 46.

WbN₂ a willow island, NNW₁ a small poplar island on the south side, river very narrow here and no sands. WbS₃ a large barren ground island on the S side with a few large poplars upon it at the upper end. SWbW_¾ a good small poplar island on S side and put up opposite to it on the north side at 6¾ p.m. Rocky on N side, river narrow and strong current, good tracking. Killed one buffalo.²

September 18, Thursday. Strong breezes at NW cloudy and very cold all day. At 6 a.m. got underway. Went WSW₁ a good creek on S side and a strong stony rapid. Tracked up it on the N side WSW₁, NW₁, SSW_¾, WNW₂, WSW₂, SWbS₄ a fine low point on N side the only one lately seen. A good deal of pretty good poplars on both sides the river in places. WbN₃ at the lower end of last reach good poplars on N side nearly drifted over with sand, NNW₁, WbN₄ put up at 6 p.m. River wide as usual and full of shoals and sands. Banks of the river lower than usual.³

September 19, Friday. Fresh breezes and variable westerly, clear cold weather. At 6 a.m. got underway, went near WbS₅ steep bank on N side at the head of the reach W_½, N₆, a kind of free stone on N side, river wide

¹ B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 versions are somewhat longer. The entry in the latter version mentions that their camping site on the north shore was the best they had yet had, it being 'on a fine meadow piece of land'. There were no woods so they were dependent upon driftwood for fires. Fidler ended, 'I am very badly & have been so now twice by sleeping upon wormwood, which causes a great looseness & pain with great lassitude thro my whole frame. Sailed most of this day'.

² The descriptions of the country are much longer in the other versions: they also mention that Fidler continued 'very badly'.

³ The other versions (particularly that in E.3/2) give longer descriptions of the country and mention that Fidler and Edward Brown each killed a cow buffalo, that Fidler still felt ill, and that during the day the party saw '2 Bears eating drowned Buffalo in the edge of the river'.

here and very shoal NNW₁ and put up on S side. These last reaches the ground on both sides the river entirely black by the buffalo they are so very numerous here. Banks low and smooth on both sides, a few poplars in places in the first reach in the morning.

DM alt. Aquilae 95 20 0
 + 30
 95 20 30¹

September 20, Saturday. At 6 a.m. got underway. Went NNW₁, a few poplars on the N side, WNW₅ fine low sloping banks on both sides the river, a large hummock of good poplars on S side with a few on the opposite, a low valley on S side at the head of the reach full of small sandy knolls and covered in some places with small bushes of a kind of willow. NNW_{1/2}, W₆, a fine flat place on N side² and a long view within at least twenty miles, the upper end of a hill here that runs down parallel with the river on the north side about four miles from it, also a low valley on S side full of entire sand hills. This is a very great place for buffalo crossing,³ lay by three hours and killed five and one bear.⁴ Fine, calm, clear pleasant weather. Rowed a good deal this day. The lower end of the last reach a long view up the river scarce any land in sight.

September 21, Sunday. At 6 a.m. got underway, went NNW_{1/2}, W₄, NWbW₂ all full of willow and poplar islands on both sides, mostly all rowing. W_{1/2}, S₈, put up at the head of a large poplar island on the south side at 7 p.m.⁵ High sand hills on south side. Fresh breezes and variable

¹ The other slightly longer versions add 50° 41' 22" latitude, and mention that Fidler still felt unwell.

² According to the B.34/a/1 version of this entry camp was set up on the south side, but the E.3/2 version states it was on the north side and that the 'Grand Boufon' was to the east.

³ The E.3/2 version continues at this point: 'a little below in this reach 3 *Mud houses* on this side amongst a few poplars, they are of a circular form about 9 feet diameter & 4½ high, they appear to be nearly 20 years old, they are said to have been built by a small war party from the Mis sis soury river, who live in these kind of habitations'.

⁴ The versions in B.34/a/1 and E.3/2 make no mention of the bear but say that the buffalo were killed by Fidler (3), Ned Brown (1), and William Park (1). The E.3/2 version, which is much the longest, continues: 'a very large single Poplar here 3 fm. round out in the plain a little from the river, sandy land, & plenty of the Prickles which delight in such soil, the lower end of this last reach the river opened like the ocean little land in sight, still very badly'. Fidler continued this entry by mentioning that they passed during the day 'a large long Poplar Island' on the south side of the river and by describing how, on his second return journey down the river in April 1802, he discovered on it the bodies of the first two Iroquois who had been murdered by Fall Indians in the previous February. See p. 312. Fidler concluded his long entry for 20 September 1800 in E.3/2 with accounts of the deaths at the hands of Fall Indians of fourteen Iroquois and two Canadians in February and March 1802 and with an outline of the events leading up to the murders. See pp. 311-14; p. 317 n. 1.

⁵ In the E.3/2 version of this entry for 21 September 1800 (which Fidler revised at a later date) he remarked, 'Mr Wills [p. 268] boy died on this Id. 1802'. According to the rough version of Fidler's

clear and pretty hot. Killed four cows. I have been very badly these six days past, but now thank God, got nearly well.¹

September 22, Monday. Went $W\frac{1}{2}$, N_4 , SW_2 a low point on the N side and a few poplars and a steep bank on the other side, near $NWbW_4$ a poplar island on the SS, $NWbN_1$ and entered a hill. $NWbN_1$, WbN_1 , WbS_1 , near $WSW\frac{1}{2}$, S_5 , high steep banks on both sides, these four reaches particularly on the N side which is entirely bare of grass, a few scrub poplars on both sides in places in the last reach, and got through the hill, all through the hill five miles below it river narrow, strong current and no sands. Good tracking what we have passed this day. Prickles fewer these two days past than usual. $SWbS_2$, $SWbW_2$, $WSW\frac{1}{2}$, $SWbS_1$ a poplar island on the north side and a strong shoot of current. $WbS_1\frac{1}{2}$ fine low banks on S side, a long view ahead, high bare banks on the N side. $SWbS_1$ and put up at $5\frac{1}{4}$ p.m. Killed one bear and one cow. Strong breezes at NE. Cold cloudy weather, sailed all day.²

September 23, Tuesday. Rain a good deal in the night and till 9 a.m. when we embarked. Went SSW_1 , near $SWbW_7$ a good point of poplars on north side, the best we have seen yet, and a good creek on S side. A small hill on S side appears about two miles off. $NWbW_1$ good point of poplars on S side and low bank on the other side. W_1 , $WSW\frac{1}{2}$,³ good poplar point on the north side, $NWbW_1$, SW_1 and put up on S side at the lower end of a large poplar island, fine sloping banks on both sides of the river in general, the latter part of the day with crooked reaches, willow sides etc., something like the Moose Woods. Fresh breezes at E cold cloudy weather, killed two cows, sailed part of the day.⁴

Chesterfield House journal for 1801-2 (p. 295, n. 1) the child, thirteen days old, died on 23 April 1802 and was buried two days later. B.39/a/2.

¹ From the other versions (B.34/a/1 and E.3/2) of this entry it appears that Fidler travelled a little further ($W\frac{1}{2}$, N_1) before camping, that the tracking had been bad and that thousands of buffalo were seen on both sides of the river. Fidler accounted for two and Benjamin Bruce shot two. About a mile below the island where they stopped they passed on the south side 'a large round large stone like a Mill stone'. Fidler was clearly looking for a building site because he also remarked 'all the Poplars yesterday & this day very stunted & short, not good for building a house with'.

² The descriptions in the other versions are slightly longer but add no other information.

³ At this point the later version of this entry in E.3/2 continues, 'here as we was tracking on S S[ide] an old Grizzle She Bear & her 2 young ones of a year old & more ran down with great vigor to the waters side, we saw them at a little distance when all our men that was walking immediately ran aboard of the Boat which was 2 feet deep & and a little from the Shore, the moment they got on board the whole 3 Bears came to the very side of it & endeavoured to get in amongst us, we had several guns Loaded but durst not fire for the men while getting in, in our hurry to drive them & keep them from coming aboard we fired several shots which severely wounded two of them when they ran away again up the Bank. These was the most daring Bears any of us had ever seen, this little hill below a very plentiful place for these Animals, being seldom or ever disturbed by any person as since we have several times [seen] 1 or 2 upon the face of the Banks, but as at this Season their Skins are not good, for want of hair, prevented our killing them'.

⁴ The marksmen were Ned Brown and Ben Bruce. E.3/2.

September 24, Wednesday. At 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. got underway. Crooked willow reaches betwixt SSW and NW₄ making SWbW₃ high steep under bank on south side, steep bare banks on N side. SE₁ $\frac{1}{2}$, WSW₂, WNW₂ good poplars on different sides the river, river 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from main bank to main bank and the points of poplars below the banks.¹ WbS₄, SbE₁ a high steep little hill on S side appears as if it had formerly been an island. SWbS₁ a poplar island on S side, put up upon it at 7 p.m. opposite the mouth of the Red Deers River where we are to build, river here 600 yards wide.²

September 25, Thursday. Crossed the river to north side and looked out for a place to build at. The woods here are few and bad for building with.

DM alt. ☉ LL	° ' "	
	75 42 15	
	+ 30	
	<u>75 42 45</u>	° ' "
	Latitude	50 55 5.

Killed one cow. Men helving hatchets.³

September 26, Friday. The best place near here is at the junction of the Bad and Red Deers River for building, on the north side. All hands falling logs for building. Putting up a saw-pit, and marked out the foundation of a victual shed and trading room 13 feet by 30. One man on hunting, killed one cow and one calf. Light breezes at SW. Clear and hot. Leaves turned yellow and falling off very fast.⁴

September 27, Saturday. I went on hunting and killed nine buffalo,⁵ sent some of the men for it, and the rest to be brought home tomorrow, not more than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile off. Some falling logs and setting up posts for the trading room. Wind and weather as yesterday.

September 28, Sunday. Men brought home the rest of the meat killed yesterday. At 2 p.m. Mr John Wills⁶ with two canoes well loaded arrived here, they belong to the New Company from Canada;⁷ he passed by the

¹ At this point in the E.3/2 version which was revised at a later date Fidler remarked, 'a little below this the 10 Irroques & 2 Canadians was killed'. See p. 314.

² The description of the country and the remarks on the day's journey are slightly longer in the other versions. That revised at a later date (E.3/2, pp. 122-41) ends with the entry for 24 September 1800. E.3/2 also includes (p. 176) some 'Astronomical Observations made at Chesterfield House . . . '.

³ The rough version in B.34/a/1 includes the following remarks: ' . . . Fresh breeze at SW, Clear & hot evg. Thunder & showers of rain. Ben & me on hunting & I killed 1 Cow. I shot an old Bull at the Tent'.

⁴ B.34/a/1 adds: 'Ben on huntg. & killed 1 Cow & 1 Calf & brot. it home'.

⁵ *Ibid.*: 7 cows, 1 calf and 1 bull.

⁶ He was one of the six wintering partners of the XY Company who became partners in the North West Company in 1804. For a biography, see W. Stewart Wallace, editor, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934), p. 505.

⁷ The XY Company. The Forsyth, Richardson and Leith, Jamieson co-partnership had been joined by Parker, Gerrard & Ogilvy earlier in the year. See p. 182, n. 2; p. 203, n. 2. The B.34/a/1

Old Company's canoes about fourteen days ago. Three or four of us going through the woods, I happening to be before, when a sprig caught the trigger of the next person's¹ gun behind me and it went off and the ball passed through the flesh part of my thigh, but I hope that I shall soon get well. Wind and weather nearly the same.

September 29, Monday. Strong gales at E flying clouds and hot with rain in the evening. Set two men to saw doors, flooring etc. of poplar, as not a single pine stick is to be seen. The rest putting up the wall of the shed and trading room, falling logs and stockades.

September 30, Tuesday. Strong gales at NW cloudy with a shower of rain in the night.² One man³ on hunting and killed three cows, and brought them home. The rest as yesterday. Water falling very fast in the river.

October 1, Wednesday. The New Company are building about 100 yards to the westward of our one. Logged the cellar and got up the ridge pole of the trading room, two men constantly employed at the pit-saw, broke the tiller of it but repaired it again. Light breezes and variable warm weather.

October 2, Thursday. Very strong gale at the west in the afternoon and cold with snow and sleet in the evening. Got on the roofing sticks on the trading room.⁴

October 3, Friday. Strong breezes at NW, cloudy cold weather, thermometer 31+ and the snow that fell last evening lying on the ground. One man⁵ on hunting and killed two cows. Cooper⁶ making things in

version of Fidler's entry for this day adds that Wills's party 'left Old Sherat 14 days ago above the Moose Woods, they left the Nippowee 1 Sept.'

¹ Added in heavier ink and probably at a later date in B.34/a/1: 'Got a ball thro my thigh, by Mr John Siverwright's gun going accidentally off'. For a biography of John Siveright of the XY Company (and later a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company), see *H.B.R.S.*, Vol. III, R. Harvey Fleming, editor, *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1940, and London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), p. 458.

² B.34/a/1 continues: 'Shared the wood with the New Co. [the] Cooper made a bench & the rest faling roofing sticks and pieces to lay the cellar and brot. them home & some putting up the beams & finished tying the Walls, 2 at the Saw as before Rob. Budge & Jno. Ross'.

³ Benjamin Bruce. *Ibid.*

⁴ B.34/a/1 adds: 'men at the saw, 4 men cut off length of wood [the] Cooper made 2 ladders'.

⁵ Benjamin Bruce. *Ibid.*

⁶ James Vallin (Velzian, Valient). See p. 188, n. 1. Of the eighteen men who accompanied Fidler from Carlton House (p. 253) none is mentioned by name in the above journal. The only names which occur in the B.34/a/1 or E.3/2 versions are: Benjamin Bruce, William Park (p. 256, n. 1), Oman Norquay (p. 275, n. 3), Robert Budge (p. 264, n. 3), and Edward Brown (p. 265, n. 3). On the inside cover of B.34/a/1 there is a pencilled list of names in Fidler's writing. Besides the six names already mentioned, the list includes those of: John Ross (? 1st, the steersman, or 2nd, the labourer), John Ballenden (? 1st, the canoe-builder, etc., or 3rd, the canoeman), Malcolm Sinclair (? 1st, the canoeman, or 2nd, the labourer), William Sinclair (? 2nd or 4th, both canoemen), James Flett (? 2nd or 3rd, both canoemen), William Tomison, canoeman, Alexander Craige (Craigie), tailor etc., John Stephen(s), James Richan, Robert Flett, John Isbester (Isbister), labourers, and Peter Corrigal, canoeman. A.30/10; B.239/f/6; B.49/a/30, fos. 4d.-5.

readiness to make kegs. The men carried in logs, stockades etc. etc. Buffalo very numerous just at the house.¹

October 4, Saturday. A bad [? day], rain, snow and sleet with a very great hurricane of wind all night that I have [? not] commonly seen. Men's employ as yesterday.²

October 5, Sunday. Light breezes at NW with flying clouds, *yesterday* snow all off the ground. Killed one cow.³ Light breezes and variable flying clouds and warm weather.

October 6, Monday. Light breezes and variable cloudy weather. Three Fall Indian young men came here to see if any person was arrived as they was told last year that houses would be built here this fall. They had been here three different times before looking out for us. They took tobacco for five chiefs. Twenty-three tents will be here in a few days. Mr Bellew⁴ arrived here with three canoes belonging to the Old Company: he is going to build close alongside our house, and one square of stockades to surround both houses with a partition betwixt the houses in the inside of the stockades. This is done in case any Indians that may visit us and behave in a hostile manner, that we could mutually assist each other to repel any attack that they might make on us, as we are now just in the centre of the Slave Indians country. Finished mudding the trading room and shed, and made two doors. Unloaded the boats and put everything into the trading room.⁵

October 7, Tuesday. Strong breezes from S to NbE cold cloudy weather. Cooper finished putting his tools in order and began to make kegs.⁶ The rest falling and cutting off logs.

October 8, Wednesday. Gave Mr Bellew leave to put his goods into our victual shed until he has got a small house of his own built. Fresh breezes at NW. Cold freezing weather. Three men on hunting and killed two cows. Six Fall Indian young men came for tobacco and returned. Men carrying in the logs, stockades etc. Hang the trading room and victual shed doors.⁷

¹ B.34/a/1 adds that two men were splitting poplar for flooring the trading room, that twelve men were carrying logs etc., and that the buffalo had 'come out of the Barren ground for cold'.

² 'Roofed the shed & put up a partition across & a bench & nearly mudded it, 2 at the saw Cooper putting his tools in readiness &c.'. *Ibid.*

³ 'Went to the remarkable place & killed 1 Cow'. *Ibid.*

⁴ Pierre Belleau. See Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), I, 239n.

⁵ The entry for this day in the B.34/a/1 rough version reads: 'Light breezes & variable Cloudy wear. Mr Bellew arrivd. 3 fall Inds. came for Tob. for 5 Chiefs - 23 Tents. Broke the saw & repd. her again finished mudding the shed. Cooper rightg. his Tools. Made 2 Doors 1 for Trading room & 1 victual shed put the goods in Trading Room.'

⁶ Vallin, the cooper, made '3 4-gall. Kegs'. *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Fresh breezes at NW Cold freezing wear. Ben, Wm. Tomison & Corrigan went with boat across & killed 2 good Cows, gave to the men for a weeks allowance. Cooper making small Kegs.

October 9, Thursday. Light breezes and variable warm weather. Cooper and sawyers at their duty and the rest collecting roofing sticks.

October 10, Friday. Strong gales at N cloudy cold weather. Laid the foundation of our dwelling house 51 feet long and 19 wide and got it up to the windows. Some more Fall Indians came for tobacco, got it and returned. They are all to be in tomorrow.¹

October 11, Saturday. Light breezes at SW, sharp frost in the night, much ice driving down the Red Deers River but none in the Bad River. At 10 a.m. twenty-three tents of Fall Indians came in, they have no furs with them, only a few back fats and a little dry meat. Got our house logged to the upper end of the windows. Thermometer 17+ at sunrise.²

October 12, Sunday. Light breezes at south clear, warm weather. Strong frost in the night. Traded victual from the Indians.³

October 13, Monday. Four men collecting stones to build the chimneys with. Cooper and sawyers constantly employed at their respective jobs, the rest got beams and ridge pole. Warm weather with light breezes at W and clear.⁴

October 14, Tuesday. Men's employ as yesterday: weather the same.⁵

October 15, Wednesday. Light breezes at south, cloudy and warm. Got up the ridge pole and variously employed about the house.⁶

October 16, Thursday. Fresh breezes at SW cloudy and warm. Men employed about the buildings; two Fall Indians arrived here, they slept two nights.⁷

6 Fall Ind. came for Tob. for 2 Chiefs, beyond those that came on Monday to be here all i.e. 13 & 11 Tents on Friday. The men carrying in all the wood fallen. Wm. Park & me hang both the Trading room & victual shed Doors & put a lock on each. Bellew put his goods into our victual shed.'

¹ The B.34/a/1 version also mentions that three men went 'on huntg. up Bad river in the Boat as usual, no Luck & no Buffalo in sight', and that the Indians also wanted liquor. Fidler did not give them any but 'the New [XY] Co. sent them 4 smll. Kegs'.

² *Ibid.*, Fidler mentioned lack of success by three men at hunting and that the Indians, on arrival, went '11 Tents to the New Co. & 12 Tents to Bellew and me'.

³ This dried meat and back fat was traded mostly from 'the other Little [MS: Letter] Cos. Inds.'. *Ibid.*

⁴ On this day Belleau 'got his house to the top above doors & windows'. Benjamin Bruce went hunting, but though he killed a cow buffalo it could not be brought to the house on account of distance. The Indians, on horseback, had a successful buffalo hunt on the north side of the river. They traded to Fidler '3 Buffalo green' and 'a little dry & beat meat'. *Ibid.*

⁵ Fidler's rough version in B.34/a/1 reads: 'Cooper makg. staves for small Kegs, 4 got 1 boat of stones 3 now got which will be enough, put up a stage to keep meat & empd. abt. the House. Bellew put up the ridge pole. Light breezes at W. Clear & warm. Buffalo at the river SS.'

⁶ 'Light breezes at S. Cloudy & warm. 2 men got logs for plank. Cooper makg. Kegs, gave the Inds. the Half dry meat & back fats traded from them to dry, got the House ready to put up the ridge pole. 4 men cut grass for the stove building. Buffalo at river on SS. Young men went for Jackasapuck on SS the Bad river above here.' *Ibid.* The young Indians presumably needed leaves of the 'Jackasapuck' plant to mix with their tobacco. See *H.B.R.S.*, XII, 132-3.

⁷ '... Inds. came from Buffalo Lake slept 2 nights. There is 13 Tents there'. B.34/a/1.

October 17, Friday. Got the roofing sticks on the house.¹ Four men with Indian horses brought the stones from the bank to build the stoves, and the cooper laid the foundation of them. Fresh breezes at W clear and hot.

October 18, Saturday. Three Blackfeet came here for tobacco.² Three men constantly employed about the chimneys, putting up partitions within the house. Wind and weather as yesterday, in the evening a heavy gale at NW.

October 19, Sunday. Fresh breezes at N overcast and warm. Three Fall Indians came here from 130 tents who are near the Saskatchewan River but are pitching this way. A Canadian belonging the Old Company and two Irroqui Indians set off for the other river accompanied by Blackfoots for guides. Thirteen tents of Fall Indians came in at 2 p.m. Some of the Indians that came here the first pitched away on Friday and Saturday. Those that are there came in have a tolerable quantity of back fats with some few grey foxes.³

October 20, Monday. Light airs and variable clear hot weather. Three at the stoves, two at the saw, some putting up partitions, and some digging a trench for stockades 75 by 78 foot. Some of the Indians traded and pitched away. A Blackfoot came for tobacco and went away.⁴

October 21, Tuesday. At noon arrived thirty tents of Fall Indians with a good number of grey foxes etc.⁵ Three men at the stoves as usual, two at the saw as before, and the rest mudding the roof of the house. Light airs at west clear and hot. Nearly all the Indians pitched away that have been here some time.

October 22, Wednesday. Strong breezes at WSW, clear hot weather. Men as before. Trading with the Indians every day, foxes, back fats etc.⁶

¹ At this point the B.34/a/1 version reads: 'Employd. the Inds. & 8 Horses with 4 of our men to bring the Stones from the Bank for the Stoves gave them 9 pt. of Liquor for it. Cooper laid the foundation of Mens & our guard room Stove being a double one'.

² *Ibid.*, '3 black foots came for Tob. for 2 Chiefs here - Bears Coat one & the other I dont know. 38 Tents of them are tenting near the Battle River'.

³ Cf. the entry for this day in the rough version, B.34/a/1: '... 3 fall Inds. came for Tob. from 130 Tents of them at or near the Beaver Lake slept 4 nights. Wrote to Mr Bird. The Old Eagle 2 Iroques & the 3 black foots accomp. them. 13 Tents of fall Inds. came in here at 2 P.M. 2 Chiefs to our house & the rest to Bellevue not one went to the New Co. some few of the Inds. that has been here this from the first pitched away on Friday & Saturday these came yestdy. brot. a good deal of meat & a few foxes, cannot take the dry meat we have already near 15 Cwt. The blackfoot say they will be in here abt. the first week in Novr. Some of the Fall Inds. have already been across at Saskatchewan & got little & was told all to come here to Trade'. Neither the original nor a copy of the letter sent to Bird has been traced.

⁴ '... a blackfoot came for Tob. & went away. One Tent of them along with the fall Ind.'. *Ibid.*

⁵ '... arrived 30 Tents of fall Inds. with a good few foxes, 12 to the New Co.'. *Ibid.*

⁶ The version in B.34/a/1 ends: 'Traded 4 Guns. Traded 4 parcht. Skins for Windows'.

October 23, Thursday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Men variously employed about the house.¹ One tent of Fall Indians came in.

October 24, Friday. Wind and weather the same. Three Blackfeet came for tobacco, thirty-five tents of them near hand, to come in as soon as the Fall Indians have done trading. A Fall Indian came for tobacco, to be here tomorrow three tents. Busily employed every day trading with the Indians. Men as before.

October 25, Saturday. Finished the stoves and mudded the roof. Three tents of Fall Indians came in. Wind and weather nearly the same. I am now got well thank God of the wound in my thigh by the shot from a gun 28th instant. [*sic*]

October 26, Sunday. Light breezes at SE clear and hot.² Traded with the Indians and part of them pitched away.

October 27, Monday. Cooper began again to make kegs. Two laying my cabin floor. Took the roof off the shed and mudded it over again. Several tents of Indians pitched away. Three Fall Indians came for tobacco for three different gangs. Put the dry meat and back fats into the victual shed as Mr Bellew has taken his goods out of it. Wind and weather the same.

October 28, Tuesday. Light breezes at W clear and hot. Twenty-two tents of Fall Indians came in.³ Five Blackfeet came for tobacco to be here tomorrow. Two men laying the cabin floor, two making kegs, and the rest mudding the walls of the house. Put up a flag staff.

October 29, Wednesday. Twenty tents of Blackfeet arrived and directly after two different gangs of Fall Indians with a few skins and a little provisions. Busily employed every day trading with the Indians. Men as yesterday. Wind and weather the same.⁴

October 30, Thursday. Strong gales at N, in the evening and cold. Two more different gangs of Fall Indians came in.⁵ Finished laying my cabin floor, hang[ing] the outer and my cabin doors and put the parchment into some windows.

October 31, Friday. Light breezes at W clear and cold. A few Blackfeet came in. Two men laying the upper floor and the rest variously employed.

¹ The fuller version in B.34/a/1 reads: '5 at the Stoves, 2 Sawing as usual 2 makg. Trenails for Stockades, part of the roof fell down in the night of our dwelling House. Men Empd. gettg. roofg. sticks the others too short & put 3 Beams on the upper Log to keep the top of the Walls in one of the posts splits much, made stuff to nail the parchmt. into the Windows, & at work at one of the outer Doors'.

² From this point the B.34/a/1 version continues: '4 Tent of fall Inds. came in. Traded a Large Iron hooped Keg for 60 foxes, several went away.'

³ At this point the B.34/a/1 version continues: '4 Chiefs to our house, 5 blackfoot men came in the Tents 24 to be here tomorrow'.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Fidler received a letter from Henry Hallett dated 7 October. There is no reference to the letter in Hallett's Island House journal, B.92/a/1.

⁵ '... came in 5 Chiefs to our house'. *Ibid.*

In the afternoon two bands of Fall Indians came in with skins and provisions. Buffalo numerous close to the water's edge on the south side the river. Busily employed with the Indians.

November 1, Saturday. Fresh gales at SW overcast and cold, ice driving down the Red Deers River; hauled our boats ashore to prevent their being cut by the ice. Fifty young men of the Blackfeet arrived here on their way to war against the Snake Indians.¹ Men variously employed.² Took all the arms consisting of guns, bows, arrows, lances and shields from the Indians that came this day and locked them up until they go away.³

November 2, Sunday. Light airs and variable overcast in the evening very strong gale at west.⁴

November 3, Monday. All hands working at their own cabins and finished them, and all hands slept in the house. Crossed eighty-five Blackfoot young men that is going to war against the Snake Indians, they say that in two moons they will return. A few Fall and Blackfeet Indians came in to trade. Fresh breezes at NW overcast and cold.

November 4, Tuesday. One man making a table, two men splitting stuff for a lower guardroom floor and the rest pointing stockades and getting ribbands for them. A few Blackfeet and Fall Indians came in with a few foxes and some provisions. Light breezes and variable cloudy and warm.⁵

November 5, Wednesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Four men employed within doors and the rest at work at the stockades.⁶ A few

¹ Gens du Serpent; Shoshoni. In the entry for 30 September 1792 in his journal of a journey from York Factory to Buckingham House, Fidler included 'Formerly the Snake Indians used to inhabit about this [Eagle] Hill [SW of Battleford, Sask.], but since the Europeans have penetrated into these parts & supplied the surrounding nations with fire arms, those Indians have gradually receded back to the SWwards, & at this time there is not a tent of that nation to be found within 500 miles'. E.3/1, p. 183. Fidler, when travelling with Piegans to the Rocky Mountains, saw his first Snake Indian on 12 December 1792. His lengthy journal entry referring to the encounter included: 'This is a man about 25 years of age, well made & very neat & clean, & his clothing nearly resembles our Indians, the only peculiarity was his hair which dragged on the ground when he walked, but our Indians say that it is chiefly Buffalo hair woven with his own, it is plaited in 6 thongs nearly a finger thick each. His stocking is above a foot longer than his leg & thigh & the surplus is rolled up in a lump above his shoe, these are the only 2 particulars that I observed from our Indians'. E.3/2, pp. 18-20.

² According to the version in B.34/a/1, the men 'put up' Fidler's cabin and 'got all the Windows into the House'. In addition four men were employed splitting wood for the guardroom floor and in finishing the floor above Fidler's cabin.

³ According to Fidler's entry in B.34/a/1, he, Belleau (N.W.C.), and Wills (XY Co.) agreed not 'to give them any Liquor till they leave this'.

⁴ In B.34/a/1 Fidler also wrote: 'Mr Wills sent up a note that he is to give the Indians Liquor. Went across with the Boat to hunt no Luck'.

⁵ The Bear returned from the war-party. Fidler received a letter dated 9 October from James Bird. *Ibid.* See *infra*, p. 278, n. 1.

⁶ The stockades were laid in rows and the wood for 120 more was obtained 'to complete the 3 sides'. One man was employed making a table. *Ibid.* For references to the fourth side of the stockade which was shared with the North West Company, see p. 276, and n. 6; p. 298, and n. 3. As will be seen (pp. 269, 314) the XY Company's fort was 'too far asunder' from Chesterfield House for Wills and Fidler to aid each other in the event of an Indian attack.

Blackfeet came in but did not bring their families; all those before have come in bag and baggage. Several pitched away.

November 6, Thursday. Four Fall and one Blackfoot came in and those that came yesterday traded and went away. Busily employed every day trading with the Indians. Men as before.¹ Strong gale at W overcast and warm in the day, light breezes.

November 7, Friday. Several tents of Indians pitched away and a large gang of Fall Indians came in. Several of the Indians that came in this day was the first we saw. This is now their second time coming in. They have a good few foxes etc. Light breezes and variable northerly overcast. Finished boring all the stockades.²

November 8, Saturday. Two men³ laying our guardroom floor, put up part of the stockades. Strong gales at west flying clouds and warm.

November 9, Sunday. Fresh breezes at SW clear fine weather.

November 10, Monday. Strong breezes at NW cloudy weather. Men as on Saturday.⁴ Six Blackfeet came for tobacco.

November 11, Tuesday. Finished putting up the stockades and laying our guardroom floor.⁵ A few Fall Indians came in.⁶

November 12, Wednesday. Fresh breezes at W cloudy and cold, Red Deers River driving full of ice. Several Fall Indians came in: this is the last of them, we have now seen them every one, in all 180 tents of them. Also a few Blackfoots came in. Cooper making kegs every day. Our fresh meat finished, the buffalo is now a good distance away.⁷

November 13, Thursday. Light airs at west clear fine weather. Red Deers River driving full of ice and not any in the other one. All the Fall Indians pitched away except those that came yesterday and the day before. Men got stockades for a watch-house and got them ready for putting up. Traded a little fresh meat from the Indians.⁸

¹ Robert Budge was 'Badly' and William Park was 'Taken very ill'. B.34/a/1.

² William Park was still 'very bad', but Robert Budge was back at work. *Ibid.*

³ Robert Budge and John Ross (? 1st or 2nd). *Ibid.*

⁴ 'Cooper [Vallin] got wood for 2 Chairs'. The six Blackfoot, who had slept three nights on their journey, reported: '17 Tents are at a Large Lake NNE pounding Buff.'. *Ibid.*

⁵ In B.34/a/1 Fidler mentioned that he sent three men hunting and some tobacco to five Blackfoot and two Fall Indians. He also included the remark: 'Se e azzy at 15' past midnt.'. On p. 3 of his MS 'Note Book' which is preserved in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Fidler recorded, 'See ee azzy . . . 1800 Novr. 10th 12.15'. On p. 12 where he listed his fourteen children born between 1795 and 1822 he included: '1800 Novr. 10 12.15 George Chesterfield House'. The Society is indebted to Mr Hartwell Bowsfield, Provincial Archivist, for the loan of a photocopy of this 'Note Book'.

⁶ In the B.34/a/1 entry Fidler also mentioned, 'Man blong. to Bellew ran away'.

⁷ The Blackfoot took liquor only in trade. The supply of fresh meat had come to an end two days earlier, but Fidler had obtained '2 thighs from Bellew yestdy.'. B.34/a/1.

⁸ The remaining Indians numbered '12 Tents in all'. The work performed that day included the splitting of wood for gates, the fitting of ninety-six stockades to ribbands, the laying of the hearth in the guardroom, and the sharpening of the pit-saw. *Ibid.*

November 14, Friday. Light breezes at NW overcast and warm. Some putting up part of the watch-house and the rest making the outer gates. Indians brought us the meat of two cows. Every Indian pitched away, not one left here at present.

November 15, Saturday. Wind as yesterday and cold cloudy weather. Three men on hunting and killed one cow. Snow fell in the night $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Finished putting stockades up for the watch-house and put up the outer gates. One tent of Fall Indians came in.

November 16, Sunday. Fresh breezes at SE overcast and very cold, much ice driving down the Bad River, the first as yet. A few Blackfeet came in.¹

November 17, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Red Deers River set fast, and Bad River entirely full of ice. Cleaned the rubbish from about the house and put up stockades to keep us separate from the French.² A few Blackfoots and Blood Indians came in.³

November 18, Tuesday. Tailor⁴ and cooper at their respective duties. Two men sawing.⁵ Brought up both boats and put them into the yard. Traded with the Indians and every one of them went away. Bad River set fast, very rough. Clearing the yard and burning the rubbish. Fresh breezes at SE overcast and cold.

November 19, Wednesday. Men variously employed, and made eighteen dozen lbs. of candles. Fresh breezes at NW, overcast and freezing hard.⁶

November 20, Thursday. Fresh breezes at SW overcast and thawed a little. Forty more Blackfoot young men came here, they are also going to war against their old enemies the Snake Indians. Overhauled the furs,

¹ The four Blackfoot who came 'brot. [skins amounting to] 100 MBr. which they took mostly in Liquor'. *Ibid*.

² The North West Company. See p. 274, n. 6.

³ Fidler's entry in B.34/a/1 also includes the following remarks: '2 finishing the gates, 2 at the Saw 1 makg. Kegs, 1 Tayloring for Tom Grey, & 2 Clearing & burning the Chips in the Yard. 1 Gang 3 men of Blackfoots came in & 1 blood Indian in the Evg. with a large Twist of hair New Compy. only got on the ridge pole to their house.'

⁴ Alexander Craige (Craigie). He 'finished Tom Greys Trowsers'. Tom Grey (Gray), a North West Company employee, was with Harmon at Fort Charlotte in July 1800. W. Kaye Lamb, editor, *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country The Journal of Daniel Williams Harmon 1800-1816* (Toronto, 1957), p. 23. In 1802 Grey was at the North West Company's house on Little Slave Lake. Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), II, 583n.

⁵ In B.34/a/1 Fidler continued: '1 Keg makg. & put up a Cookg. Crane in our guardroom 3 hewing logs for flooring. Mal. Sinclair [2nd or 4th] cut his Leg, got up both boats with the assistance of all the french from both houses. Traded with the Inds. & they all went away, not any here again the 2d time. River (Bad) set fast very rough. Put windows into the warehouse . . .'

⁶ Fidler's entry in B.34/a/1 reads in full, 'Wednesday. French put up their part of the Stockades that seperates both Houses. 2 finished putting up small Stockades over both our gates, 2 carried home firewood Cooper got wood for Kegs, 2 Cleaning out the yard, 3 putting up the partition across the House above the Beams, 4 hewing Log for their floor. Fresh breezes at NNW, overcast & very Cold, began to bind Books, 7 Vols. Made 150 Candles, before made 82.'

provisions etc. traded since we came here and put them upstairs, found as follows: foxes grey 4570, red 28, wolves 158, badgers 26, beaver 10½, cats common 3, also 2000 lbs. of bladder fat and 2000 lbs. and upwards of back fats and dry meat with but little beat meat. Finished the partition in the middle of the house.¹

November 21, Friday. Calm, clear warm weather. Four men laying their guardroom floor and the rest variously employed. A few Fall Indians came in with some furs and fresh meat, traded and went away.

November 22, Saturday. Finished laying the men's guardroom floor. The Blackfoot young men set off for war, a Blackfoot came in with fresh meat. Fitted out two Fall Indians to hunt for us. Light breezes at SW fine warm weather.

November 23, Sunday. Light airs westerly clear hot weather. A few Fall Indians came in.

November 24, Monday. The Fall Indians traded and went away, also a few Blackfeet came in. Men variously employed. Light airs at SE clear, fine warm weather.

November 25, Tuesday. Strong gales in the night at WNW, light airs in the day clear and hot. The Blackfoots traded and went away, also a Fall Indian came in traded and returned. Men as before.

November 26, Wednesday. Four men constantly employed making kegs, two at the pit-saw, one man on hunting and brought home one bull, no cows near. A large band of Fall Indians came in. Wind and weather nearly the same. The rest of the men variously employed about completing the house.

November 27, Thursday. Men hewing logs for the watch-house. Several Indians went away and four different gangs of Fall Indians came in.

November 28, Friday. Men's employ as before. A large gang of Blackfeet came in. Busy trading with the Fall Indians that came yesterday.

November 29, Saturday. Men as yesterday. Several of the Indians traded and went away. Light breezes and variable warm weather these three days past.

November 30, Sunday. Light airs at SW overcast and warm. Most part of the Blackfeet went away. Engaged a Blackfoot chief to accompany four of our men as guide to Edmonton House as we are short of several articles of trading goods, not having either a bit of cloth or a kettle in the house. A few Fall Indians came in yesterday; traded and went away this day. Blackfoots sent in for tobacco, and in the evening the rest all pitched away.

December 1, Monday. Four men making kegs as usual, two at the saw

¹ The rough version, B.34/a/1, ends with this day's entry.

and the tailor making small coats of embossed serge and baize. Four men getting ready to set off to Edmonton House to fetch some articles of trading goods. The rest variously employed. A small gang of Blackfoots and the same of Fall Indians came in with a good trade. The Fall Indians hitherto have killed more skins than the Blackfeet does man for man, besides the Fall Indian cleans their skins well whereas the Blackfoot ones are in general very greasy and not well stretched.

December 2, Tuesday. Sent four men with two horses accompanied by a Blackfoot chief to Edmonton House, and sent the following letter with them.

Chesterfield House, 1st December 1800.

Dear Sir,¹ As we have entirely finished our house and have traded all our cloth, kettles etc. etc., and particularly as there is a very favourable opportunity of passing overland with safety as nearly all the Blackfoot young men are gone to war against the Snake Indians, therefore have sent four men² (accompanied by a Blackfoot chief as guide) for some articles of trading goods much wanted here, particularly cloth for chiefs coats and other things to rig chiefs with as per list enclosed.

Our trade at present amounts to nearly 4000 made beaver and not more than 250 wolves, mostly all foxes. Since the Indians first came in here, which was early in October, we have scarce been able to stir for them, scarce a single day clear of them, mostly all Fall Indians with some few Blackfeet.

Our river set in the 17th instant but since we have had a short summer; buffalo at present very scarce about us, but expect when the winter sets in that we shall have them more plentiful and nearer hand.

I wish you to dispatch our men as quick back as possible.

Wishing you health, happiness and a good trade and remain Dear Sir, Your humble servant, P. Fidler.

P.S. Have sent a trading gun lock that wants a new mainspring.

List of articles sent for: feathers to go round hats, red, 20; cloth fine red, yds. 50, plain or corded red, 40; handkerchiefs small silk, no. 24; lace orris, yds. 200; shirts check, no. 10; sashes, 30; flints, 3 or 400; long nails for a bateau, 500; brass cock, 1; lock for gates, 1.

Men at the house variously employed. Two gangs of Fall, and one gang

¹ If Fidler had been addressing James Bird he would, presumably, have acknowledged the letter he received from him on 4 November. See p. 274, n. 5. The big drop in the Edmonton House trade returns and the increase in those from Acton House at the end of season 1800-1 (p. lxxviii) suggest that James Bird made his winter headquarters at the latter post. James Sutherland (3rd) replied to Fidler's letter. P. 282. See also p. 279, n. 1.

² It is not possible to identify them.

of Blood Indians came in. Fresh breezes at SE overcast and cooler than usual. Thick fog in the morning.

December 3, Wednesday. Fresh breezes at ESE with light snow and cold weather. Four men making kegs, two men sawing stuff for an upper floor in our dwelling house, and the rest hewing logs for the inside of the watch-house. The Indians that came yesterday all traded and went away.

December 4, Thursday. Fresh breezes at SE and cold, several places in the Bad River clear of ice by the late warm weather. Finished laying our floor above, and the rest as before. Three men overhauling the furs. Three different gangs of Indians came in yesterday, two of Fall and one of Blood Indians. They traded this day and most part of them went away.

December 5, Friday. Men variously employed. Light breezes clear fine weather. A few Fall Indians came in, traded and went away, also young men came in for tobacco for nine Blood Indian chiefs.

December 6, Saturday. Light breezes at south east with light snow. A large gang of Blood Indians came in, but had little; they have been at the Stony Mountain House this fall. Men variously employed and cleaned the yard and about the house of chips etc. and set fire to them. Sent two men on hunting but they saw no buffalo.

December 7, Sunday. Fresh breezes at E overcast. Busy trading with the Blood Indians.

December 8, Monday. Strong gales at N with light drifting snow most part of the day and cold. Four men employed making kegs, tailor at his duty, and the rest getting firewood. A gang of Blood Indians came in.

December 9, Tuesday. Fresh breezes at N morning cloudy, latter part clear and very sharp. Traded with the Blood Indians and they all went away. Four Canadians left this to go to the Saskatchewan River. Men as before.

December 10, Wednesday. Light airs at NE, clear and very sharp. Sent some of the Blackfeet on hunting who are tenting here and they brought us the meat of 2½ buffalo. The Blood Indians also brought us three buffalo, those that went away yesterday. Men as on Monday.

December 11, Thursday. Men's employ as before. An Indian came here for us to fetch meat from his tent tomorrow. Traded a horse from the Blood Indians last night and they stole him away in the night. Light breezes at N clear and warm.¹

December 12, Friday. A large band of Blackfeet came in. Sent two men

¹ On 19 February 1801 James Bird wrote from Nelson House to William Tomison at Cumberland House, 'By the last account received from Mr Fidler (dated, Fork of the South Branch Decr. 11) his trade then was 4700 MBr. of which 150 only were wolves; his guns were then nearly all sold but of other goods he expected to have more than sufficient save Cloth (a supply of which he sent for to Edmonton House & which I hope he may have received safe) tho' the Indians bid fair to make good hunts. The Indians there treat our men with the utmost civility'. B.49/c/1, fo. 1.

with two horses to fetch meat and in the evening they returned with $1\frac{1}{2}$ buffalo. Laid the victual floor and stowing by the meat. Light breezes at SW overcast and warm.

December 13, Saturday. Strong breezes at W hot thawy weather, nearly all the snow melted although full two inches on the ground before. The Indians traded and all went away. Men as on Monday.

December 14, Sunday. Fresh gales at WSW overcast and thawed much, no snow on the ground.

December 15, Monday. Fresh breezes at NW and hot weather. All hands carrying in logs for the watch-house. A Blackfoot brought us one cow. A Fall Indian came in with furs traded and went away.

December 16, Tuesday. Four men making kegs. Tailor at his duty, and the rest got firewood. Employed a Blackfoot to hunt for us and sent him away with two of our men to tent with him. A Fall Indian came in with furs, traded and returned.

December 17, Wednesday. Men as yesterday. Two gangs of Fall Indians came in. Fresh breezes and variable fine weather.

December 18, Thursday. Light breezes at SE overcast and warm. Four men employed putting up the logs of the watch-house and the rest at their respective jobs. The Fall Indians traded and all went away. Also a Blackfoot came in with furs.

December 19, Friday. A gang of Fall Indians came in, Traded with the Blackfoot that came yesterday and he went away. Men variously employed. Two Fall Indian men sent in for tobacco, to be here tomorrow; it is a constant custom when any of the Slave Indians are coming in to the houses to send for tobacco a day or two prior to their arrival; and it is further observed that he that never killed an enemy is not entitled to send for tobacco although he should be a very old man, but are looked upon by their countrymen little better than old women. Light breezes at E overcast and cold.

December 20, Saturday. Light breezes at SE morning clear, afternoon cloudy and warm. Three men making carrot tobacco, and the rest variously employed. A small gang of Fall Indians came in.

December 21, Sunday. All the Fall Indians traded and went away except the two chiefs who will go tomorrow. Light breezes at SE with a very thick fog and cold. Snow fell in the night $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

December 22, Monday. Light airs at E overcast and cold. Evening clear and very sharp. Four men making small kegs as usual. Tailor at work for the men and the rest variously employed.

December 23, Tuesday. Two Fall Indians came in with furs and a little dry provisions. Men as before.

December 24, Wednesday. Light breezes at SE overcast and cool weather. The two men came home from the hunting tent with one buffalo, four more to fetch; they are very scarce. Men variously employed.

December 25, Thursday. Three Fall Indians came in with furs, traded and went away; also two Blackfoots came in. Light breezes etc. as before.

December 26, Friday. Three Blackfeet came in with furs and some fresh meat. Coopers and tailor as usual, and the rest got firewood and otherwise variously employed. Clear sharp weather, with light breezes at E and thick rime in the morning.

December 27, Saturday. Men as before. Light airs easterly clear and sharp. The men came from the hunting tent with one cow. About seven days ago the Snake Indians have stolen 120 horses from the Muddy River Indians and the latter are immediately going to war against them.

December 28, Sunday. Fresh breezes NNW with thick snow. The men returned to the hunting tent with two horses. Four Blackfoots came in.

December 29, Monday. Light breezes and variable clear and very sharp. Two men making kegs, tailor at work for the men, the rest variously employed. The two men came from the hunter's tent with four horse-loads of meat, the hunter having lent us two to get the meat home.

December 30, Tuesday. Tradesmen as before and the rest cut firewood. Light breezes and variable clear and sharp. The two men returned to the hunter's tent.

December 31, Wednesday. The two men returned from the hunter's tent and brought four horse-loads of meat. All the Indians went away. Calm, clear weather and very sharp.

January 1, 1801, Thursday. Two Fall Indians came in with furs. Fresh breezes at ESE cold cloudy weather.

January 2, Friday. Light breezes at S, overcast and warmer than usual. The hunter pitched to the house, very few buffalo near here; he brought the meat of near one buffalo. Paid him off as he means to hunt no more. Men variously employed.

January 3, Saturday. Light breezes at W overcast and warm. The Fall Indians went away. Men as before.

January 4, Sunday. Wind and weather nearly as yesterday. Two Fall Indians came in with furs from a pound¹ about twenty miles off. Buffalo very plentiful close at the river on the south side opposite the house, but the Fall Indians runs them on horseback so that we have a poor chance of killing any.

¹ Buffalo pound.

January 5, Monday. Indians went away. Two men brought home the meat of two cows killed near the house. Three men making kegs. Tailor at work for the men. The rest cut firewood. Light breezes at NE clear and sharp.

January 6, Tuesday. Light breezes at SE clear sharp weather. The rest as before.

January 7, Wednesday. Light airs and overcast. Evening strong gales at W with snow. Men as on Monday. At 3 p.m. our four men returned from Edmonton House with trading goods, they brought the following letter with them:

Edmonton House, 21st December 1800.

Sir, On the arrival of your men the 19th instant would have dispatched your letters to Mr Bird,¹ but by their information of your being short of several articles of trading goods, and that detaining them here nine or ten days until we could receive an answer from him might prove more dangerous upon account of the Indians; also being confident that you can be supplied with every article of trading goods here, that can be spared at any other place, has induced me to open your letter, and as you are assured there will be no danger in passing goods at present. Have therefore taken it upon me to return the men with an assortment of trading goods, as near your request as possible I can; hoping that it will meet the approbation of Mr Bird and you likewise, in not detaining them here, as they were seventeen days in coming and likely to be longer in returning, which might disappoint you for want of the goods.

The goods sent is as per list enclosed, there not being one single feather to go round hats in the house, nor so much fine cloth as you requested; have sent you instead of the former, ostrich feathers, and the latter cloth common to the quantity you wanted.

There is very little appearance of any trade at this place this year, the Indians having all deserted it upon account of there being nothing near the place for them to kill. Wishing you happiness a good trade and remain, Sir, Your humble servant, Jas. Sutherland.²

List of articles brought here: cloth red common, yds. 69, fine 20; handkerchiefs small silk, no. 20; lace orris, yds. 240; flints, no. 400; shirts check, 10; sashes, no. 30; feathers ostrich, 41; gun 3 feet, 1; kettle brass, 1 lb. 5 lb. [*sic*]; nails, 500; lock pad, 1; cock brass, 1.

¹ Bird was either at Nelson House or more likely Acton House. See p. lxxviii.

² James Sutherland, the 3rd. See p. 134, n. 2.

The men says that for ten days not a single stick is to be found, being entire barren plains, having only buffalo dung to make any fire with.

January 8, Thursday. Light breezes at SW clear and warm. Men's employ as on Monday. A Fall Indian came in, traded and went away. An Indian brought us one red deer. Some of those that went to war the first returned, they found no Snake Indians; the rest to be here in a few days.

January 9, Friday. Wind and weather and men's employ as before.

January 10, Saturday. All the young Blackfoots returned from war, fortunately they found nobody. A large band of Blackfeet came in, with a good quantity of furs and provisions. Cleaned out the yard and other ways employed. Wind and weather the same.

January 11, Sunday. Strong gales at WSW and hazy. Snow thawed. Traded with the Indians and paid the guide for accompanying our men to Edmonton House. A Fall Indian came in traded and went away.

January 12, Monday. Light breezes at E clear fine weather. Coopers and tailor at their respective duties, and the rest variously employed, cutting up back fats to melt into fat, cutting firewood etc. A few Fall Indians came in with furs and a few buffalo tongues from the pound. The foxes now and for fourteen days past will not take a trap, the he and she are following one another; Blackfoots went away.

January 13, Tuesday. Fall Indians traded and went away. Men as before. Light breezes ENE overcast.

January 14, Wednesday. Men as on Monday. Light airs NE with light snow, much rime in the woods.

January 15, Thursday. Men as before. Three Canadians arrived here from the Saskatchewan River. Light airs at N, overcast, evening clear.

January 16, Friday. Men as before and finished the watch-house. A Fall Indian brought us two cows. Light airs SE and clear.

January 17, Saturday. Light breezes at E nearly clear. Four men cutting ice to stow by to preserve the meat in the shed in the spring, and the rest as before.

January 18, Sunday. Light airs at NE with light snow.

January 19, Monday. Light breezes at SE clear and sharp. Four men making soap, tailor and one man making chiefs coats, coopers as usual, and the rest variously employed.

January 20, Tuesday. The men as yesterday. An Indian brought us one cow. Light breezes at W clear and warm.

January 21, Wednesday. Early this morning four Canadians set off for Carlton House for trading goods. Men as before. Several Fall Indians came in but brought very little.

January 22, Thursday. Light airs at W, yesterday and this day and warm. Men as before. Fall Indians went away.

January 23, Friday. Men as on Monday. An Indian brought us three cows. Light airs at W clear and hot.

January 24, Saturday. Two men belonging the New Company set off to go to Buckingham House¹ for trading goods. Men as before and finished making soap for me and themselves. Light airs variable clear and warm.

January 25, Sunday. Light airs, clear fine warm weather. Two of our men on hunting and killed one cow.

January 26, Monday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Two men making carrot tobacco, three men making kegs, two men making chiefs coats, and the rest cutting up back fats, cutting firewood etc. etc. Two Blackfeet came in with furs, rigged one.

January 27, Tuesday. Men as before. A Fall Indian came in, traded and went away. Wind and weather as before.

January 28, Wednesday. Finished making the last carrot of own tobacco. The rest as before. Light breezes at SW clear and warm. The Blackfeet went away.

January 29, Thursday. Coopers and tailors as before, some hauling up ice from the river to put into the victual shed and otherwise employed. A Fall Indian came in.

January 30, Friday. The Fall Indian traded and went away. Four men hauling up ice and the rest as before. Fresh breezes at ESE and overcast.

January 31, Saturday. Light breezes at SE overcast. Two men on hunting killed two cows and brought them home. Four men stowed the ice and meat together in the shed, cleaned out the yard. The rest at their respective duties.

February 1, Sunday. Strong gales at WSW flying clouds and thawed much, no snow on the ice and water running over the ice. The Blackfeet brought us four cows, which will be enough with what we have till the embarkation in the spring.

February 2, Monday. Two men making kegs. Four men getting ready to hunt pitch to accompany the Canadians who are going for the like purpose, tailors making Indian clothing, and the rest variously employed. Fresh breezes at NW clear and sharp.

February 3, Tuesday. Wind and weather as yesterday. Sent four men with four horses to hunt pitch. The rest as before.

¹ Buckingham House of the Hudson's Bay Company and Fort George of the North West Company had been closed and new houses built on an island some fifteen to twenty miles higher upstream. See p. lxxxiv. Writing from Nelson House on 19 February 1801 to William Tomison at Cumberland House, James Bird said, 'We have just received a few lines from Mr Fidler dated Janry. 24th in which he tells us that his trade amounts to 7000 MBr. but that the Indians were killing very few Furrs'. B.49/c/1, fo. 4-4d.

February 4, Wednesday. Men as on Monday. Wind and weather the same. A Blackfoot came in with a few skins.

February 5, Thursday. Fresh breezes at ESE clear and sharp. Men as yesterday.

February 6, Friday. One man cleaned out the yard and the rest as before. The Blackfoot traded and went away. Light breezes at NW, clear and very sharp.

February 7, Saturday. All hands carrying in poplar logs to saw for stuff to make a bateau, and then afterwards as yesterday. Light breezes at SE clear and sharp.

February 8, Sunday. Fresh breezes at E overcast and cold. A Blackfoot came in.

February 9, Monday. Three men melting the back fats, two men sawing boards for a bateau as we have already more furs and provisions than will load the two boats brought here. Two men making kegs, tailors at work at Indian clothing, and the rest variously employed. Fresh breezes at SW overcast and cold.

February 10, Tuesday. Three Blackfoots came in. Men as yesterday. Light breezes at ESE overcast and warmer than lately.

February 11, Wednesday. Fresh breezes as yesterday and thawed a good deal. Men as before.

February 12, Thursday. Light airs at NW nearly clear and thawed. Men as on Monday. The Blackfoots traded and went away. Several tents of Fall Indians came here.

February 13, Friday. Light airs and variable clear and thawed much. Ground bare of snow on SS the hills. Men as before. Several Blackfeet that have been here most part of the winter, doing nothing, pitched away to kill foxes etc.

February 14, Saturday. Light breezes at W clear and hot. Men as before. Very little snow left on the ground.

February 15, Sunday. A few tents of Fall Indians came in, they have left off hunting this season. Strong breezes at east overcast and thawed. In the afternoon the Canadians and our four men returned that went for pitch, having not seen a single pine tree, they returned short although they say that they went five successive days journey up the river, but I imagine they were very short ones.

February 16, Monday. Three Fall Indians came in. Tailors and coopers as before, and the rest variously employed, sawing stuff for a bateau etc. Heavy gales at NW clear and cold. One hundred Fall Indians set off to war against the Snake Indians about five nights ago.

February 17, Tuesday. Light airs at SW clear and sharp. Tradesmen as

before, some cutting and melting back fats and the others variously employed. Two Fall Indian young men that went away to kill foxes etc. in November found killed and all their property taken from them, it is since found to be the Blackfoots who killed them and took 170 foxes etc. etc. only one day's journey from the house. Very probably when the Fall Indians know the rights that a scuffle will be betwixt them this summer.¹

February 18, Wednesday. Men as yesterday. Three Fall Indians came in and one Blackfoot. Light breezes at WSW clear sharp weather.

February 19, Thursday. Light breezes at S clear and sharp. Three Fall Indians came in; every one of them that now comes to the house remains here until most part of them arrive, when they mean to trade and all pitch away together up the Bad River. Men variously employed and made forty-one bags of pemmican of 75 lbs. each.

February 20, Friday. Light breezes at SE rather hazy. Men's employ as on Monday. Eight Fall Indians came in.

February 21, Saturday. Fresh breezes at WNW flying clouds and thawed a little. Men as before and tailors finished making Indian coats etc. Cleaned out the yard. Finished trading the last of our cloth and carrot tobacco. Indians drinking *all night*, the first time since we arrived here.

February 22, Sunday. Light breezes SE clear, Indians busy trading and nearly all the Fall Indians came in, with the women of those gone to war, with a middling good trade, all circumstances considered.

February 23, Monday. Light airs at SW clear and thawed. Two men making kegs, two men at tailors work for the men. Three men melting fat, getting mallets and wedges for the press etc. Indians busy trading all day and several pitched away.

February 24, Tuesday. Light breezes at SE clear and cloudy, alternate and cold weather. Indians busy trading and most part of them pitched away, as there is no grass or buffalo near this place. Two men sawing stuff for a bateau and the rest as before.

February 25, Wednesday. Dull cold weather with light breezes at east. Brought home the stuff for the press, mallets, wedges etc. etc., the rest as before and finished melting the last of our back fats; late in the evening three men belonging to the New Company came here from Buckingham House.

February 26, Thursday. Light breezes at NW, fine clear warm weather. Tradesmen as before, and the rest making the press to pack furs and otherwise variously employed. Made a few pemmican bags.

February 27, Friday. Two Blackfoots came in with furs and brought

¹ See p. 299, n. 1

word that the Muddy River and Blood Indians are lately returned from war against the Snake Indians. Six of the latter and five of the former got killed. Tradesmen as usual and made twenty-one bags of pemmican of 75 lbs. each. Light breezes at WNW, clear and thawed.

February 28, Saturday. Men variously employed. Wind etc. the same.

March 1, Sunday. Light breezes at NW clear, evening cloudy. Rigged nine Fall Indian men, two of which are the heads of all the Fall Indians. Also rigged one Blackfoot.

March 2, Monday. Fresh breezes at SW clear and warm. Tradesmen, sawyers etc. as before. The rest variously employed. The last of the Fall Indians came in with their spring hunt, they are to kill no more foxes this season, they say that they are all going to pitch away far off.

March 3, Tuesday. Men as before, and four men getting ready to hunt pitch tomorrow. The last of the Fall Indians went away. Strong gales at WSW clear and thawed much. Ducks first seen. No snow on the ground.

March 4, Wednesday. Sent four men for pitch, with three horses accompanied by two Blackfoots as guides, as the pines are a long way off. Tradesmen as usual, and the rest began to pack furs. Strong gales, clear and thawed much, river clear of ice along the banks.

March 5, Thursday. Three Blackfoots came in with furs etc. Men variously employed. Fresh breezes at SE overcast and hot.

March 6, Friday. Blackfoots traded, The men employed packing furs. Light airs and variable clear and hot.

March 7, Saturday. Fresh breezes at WSW clear and hot. Men as yesterday.

March 8, Sunday. Wind as yesterday, cloudy and cool.

March 9, Monday. Strong gales at NW flying clouds and cold. Men employed packing furs.

March 10, Tuesday. Strong gales at E cloudy and cold. Several Blackfeet came in, and rigged a few. Men as yesterday.

March 11, Wednesday. Fresh breezes and variable warm weather. A large gang of Blackfeet came in along with one Muddy River Indian. Rigged the Blackfoot chief and another man. Several sent for tobacco to be here tomorrow. Men as before.

March 12, Thursday. Light breezes at SW clear and warm. Men as usual, packing furs. Several Blackfoot came in and rigged six, several traded and went away.

March 13, Friday. Strong gales at W clear and warm. One Blackfoot came in, traded and went away. Rigged a Blackfoot and several pitched away. Men as before.

March 14, Saturday. Light breezes and variable clear weather. One

Blackfoot came in, traded and went away. Men packing furs and cleaned out the yard.

March 15, Sunday. Fresh breezes at NW clear and cool.

March 16, Monday. Men employed as last week packing furs. A large gang of Blackfeet came in and rigged a few. The Canadians returned from Carlton House with trading goods, very deep snow in the low country they say.

March 17, Tuesday. Fresh breezes at SE clear weather. Traded with the Blackfeet and most of them went away. Men as yesterday.

March 18, Wednesday. Fresh breezes at west clear and hot. A large gang of Blackfeet came in, they are the last of all the Indians that will be here this spring. Our men returned from pitch-hunting with a sufficient quantity. Men as before.

March 19, Thursday. All the Indians traded and most part of them went away; they had very little, although they have not been at any house since October last. Men as before. Light breezes at SE clear and hot.

March 20, Friday. Light airs at W clear fine weather. Several holes broke in the ice in both rivers. Men left off packing furs, we have now packed 139 bundles containing 11,909 made beaver, we have a few yet unpacked.

March 21, Saturday. Wind and weather nearly as yesterday evening strong breezes at SE. The *last* of the Indians pitched away. Men variously employed.

March 22, Sunday. Hot weather with fresh breezes at NW. Both the rivers broke up and ice drove down. Two Canadians ran away to remain with the Blackfeet.

March 23, Monday. Began to build a bateau, and all hands employed about it. Fresh breezes at NW and clear.

March 24, Tuesday. Fresh breezes at SE, cold and cloudy. Men as before.

March 25, Wednesday. Strong gales at E cold and cloudy. Men as before, and one man began to caulk our two boats.

March 26, Thursday. Wind and weather and men's employ the same.

March 27, Friday. Fresh breezes at NNW weather the same. Men as before.

March 28, Saturday. Gave guns to those that have none for defence when we go down, in case any strange Indians offers to attack us, also gave them powder and ball. Men as before.

March 29, Sunday. Fresh breezes at N cold weather.

March 30, Monday. Four men employed about the bateau, and the rest variously employed. A variety of weather with a strong gale at N in the evening with light snow.

March 31, Tuesday. Finished caulking our two boats and got them down to the river. Employed building the bateau. Fresh breezes at east clear and very cold.

April 1, Wednesday. Men pitching the boats and at work at the bateau. Wind and weather the same.

April 2, Thursday. Men's employ as yesterday.

April 3, Friday. Seven men on hunting for buffalo skins to make line of for tying and fettling bundles, the rest employed at the bateau. Wind and weather, as before. Hunters returned in the evening with three skins.

April 4, Saturday. Men at the bateau and employed cleaning about the house and burning the rubbish etc.

April 5, Sunday. Light airs and variable hot weather.

April 6, Monday. Sent five men on hunting up the Bad River in a boat to kill buffalo as our fresh meat is scarce. The rest of the men employed caulking the bateau etc.

April 7, Tuesday. Men's employ as yesterday.

April 8, Wednesday. Men as yesterday and finished caulking the bateau.

April 9, Thursday. The men returned from hunting and brought the meat of five cows. Got the bateau down to the water's edge ready for pitching, also packed three bundles of furs. In the evening a Blackfoot came to the house with six made beaver.

April 10, Friday. Pitched the bateau and otherwise employed. At noon five Blood Indians arrived with a few skins, they have been at the Stony Mountain House only sixteen nights ago.

April 11, Saturday. Traded with the Blood Indians and they went away in company with the Blackfoot that came here on Thursday night. Packed one bundle of furs and the last, containing $12,073\frac{2}{3}$ made beaver, the trade that has been made at our house this season; but as the wolves pass for only $\frac{1}{2}$ beaver each, reduces the above $408\frac{1}{2}$ made beaver.¹

April 12, Sunday. Flying showers of rain, light breezes and variable.

April 13, Monday. Set twelve men to make a small bateau out of one large tree, for crossing the river with, and the rest packing up some of our goods to lay up here.

April 14, Tuesday. Men at work at the small bateau etc.

April 15, Wednesday. Men as yesterday.

April 16, Thursday. Men as before.

April 17, Friday. Finished making the small bateau and got it to the river.

April 18, Saturday. Sent away two men in company with two Canadians

¹ In the 'Genl. State of Trade' in the York Factory account book for 1800-1 (B.239/d/123, fo. 28d.) the amount for Chesterfield House was given as 12,000 made beaver.

to take our horses which are four and theirs seven to convey them down to Carlton House, as horses are very scarce there and our house will be left for the summer. The rest variously employed.

April 19, Sunday. Strong gales at SE. Clear weather.

April 20, Monday. The New Company embarked for Cumberland House after laying up the remains of their goods. Our men variously employed.

April 21, Tuesday. The Old Company canoes all embarked for Cumberland House. Stowed by the rest of our remains and put them all underground, and got everything ready to embark for Cumberland House tomorrow. Loaded the boats etc.

April 22, Wednesday. At 8 a.m. we all left the house and embarked for Cumberland House in two boats and one large bateau loaded with furs, fat, and pemmican.

May 12.

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The above observation¹ taken at the lower *edge* of the *Moose Woods* on N side the river at the water's edge.

¹ Following these observations which Fidler introduced into the entry for 31 August 1800 in the E.3/2 version (see p. 258, n. 2), he remarked: 'All these Observations made 12th May 1801 on our return from Chesterfield house when we left that house 22d April & long before not any snow was to be seen & all the appearance of Summer all the way till 13th, when strong gales of Wind from the North East with Snow without intermission for 2 days & nights & the Snow on the level was knee deep, much more than we saw the whole Winter, and the drifts in some places was more than 6 feet deep [see p. 317, n. 1], we remained here 5 days on that account. The weather was not very cold all the time'.

May 16.

	°	'	"	
DM alt. ☉ LL	111	57	45	
	+		30	
	111	58	15	Latitude 52 53 2

Taken at the South Branch House that was destroyed by the Fall Indians 1794.¹

May 19. Arrived at Carlton House. Left it the 22d and arrived at Cumberland House 25th instant.²

Peter Fidler.

[Meteorological and Astronomical Observations, made at Chesterfield House, covering 15 manuscript pages, not printed].

¹ See p. 255, n. 2.

² Fidler was left in charge at Cumberland House on 7 June when Tomison, after spending season 1800-1 there, started for Oxford House with 'five Boats loaded with 210 Bundles of Furs and manned with 32 Men'. B.49/a/30 and 31.

JOURNAL OF PETER FIDLER

1801-1802

Chesterfield House Journal;¹ to which is annexed Meteorological Observations, made at the same place by Peter Fidler

1801

September 27, Sunday. Arrived at noon at Chesterfield House, we carried everything and put in the house, found it safe, and everything we laid up in the ground all summer. A good many Blood Indians here on our arrival, waiting for us; they say that nearly all the Blackfeet and Fall Indians are also nigh hand. They also further told us that the Southern Indians from below and the Stone Indians had killed fourteen men and sixty women and children of the Fall Indians thirty-four days ago.² We left Cumberland House the 14 August and arrived at Carlton House the 21st and left it the day after;³ parted with Mr Bird, Howse, Hallet and Pruden, who proceeds up the Saskatchewan River with two well-loaded boats and two canoes.⁴ Waited twelve days for the Old and New Companies coming up, when we was under the necessity of proceeding, not seeing anything of them. Buffalo very plentiful all along on both sides of the river.

September 28, Monday. Upwards of forty men came here in the night for tobacco, for the Blackfeet, Blood and Fall Indians, they got it and went away. Told them not to come to trade until Wednesday, as we shall not be able to get our shop and the goods opened before. Put windows into the house. Sent seven men on hunting and they brought home three bulls, no cows to be seen.

September 29, Tuesday. Employed helving hatchets and stowing by the

¹ A table of some of the contents of this journal, written in a different hand, appears at the beginning of the record. It reads: 'This Journal mentions the Blackfoot, Fall, Snake, Blood & Tattoo Indians; 31 Octr. account of a large tribe of Tattoo Indians; 4 Decr. Pitch to be got 80 miles from Chesterfield Ho.; 29 do. Thousands of Buffaloes, plenty of Cows, some horses; the different tribes of Indians at war; they killed some Iroquois & 2 Canadians in consequence of one of their people being killed by the Canadians; they appear to be a very dangerous tribe to deal with & it cannot perhaps be expected that any trader will return to this Station; our people took the precaution to join with the Canadians to prevent an attack by the Natives.'

² See p. 317, n. 1.

³ Bird had orders from Tomison to take all the property away from Carlton House. B.49/a/31, 14 August 1801.

⁴ Henry Hallett, as will be seen from Fidler's journal, wintered in charge of the Island House. Owing to lack of records it is impossible to say exactly where Bird, Howse and Pruden were stationed during 1801-2.

goods. Traded the meat of three jumping deer, we are rather in want of fresh meat.

September 30, Wednesday. A great many Blackfeet, Blood and Fall Indians came in. Received no less than seventy-two chiefs belonging to the three tribes, although only five of the latter. They have a tolerable quantity of beat meat and fat with some dried fruit. Dug up the small bateau that was laid up in the spring: the heavy rise of water in the summer had buried it four feet deep in sand. Busy trading with the Indians.

October 1, Thursday. Men¹ variously employed about the house, and gave tobacco to eight Fall Indian chiefs who came in, in the afternoon.

October 2, Friday. At 3 p.m. two canoes belonging to the New Company with Mr Wills arrived here, they left the Nippowe the 5 September. Set two men to saw boards and the rest as before. We have not less than fourteen hundred men, women and children here of Indians belonging to the three tribes. Traded two horses from Indians, to carry meat upon.

October 3, Saturday. Nine Fall Indian chiefs came in, they have a little dry provisions. Men mudding the house and repairing the chimneys. Two men also began to make kegs. The Fall Indians have had the smallpox amongst them this summer and carried off upwards of 100 all young people,² they received it from a few Tattood Indians³ who comes far to the south, and they are said to have got it from some other Indians that trade with the Europeans far down the Mis sis sury River. The Fall Indians, on account of the war and disease this summer cutting off such numbers of them, appears desperate, and is nearly ready to fall on anyone they can.

October 4, Sunday. Busily employed trading with the Indians.

October 5, Monday. The Indians pushed our small bateau into the water and drove away; sent two men to look for it and they brought it home, found it about three miles below, drove ashore. Two men making kegs, two at the saw, and the rest mudding the houses and repairing the chimneys and other necessary jobs about the house. A few Indians went away.

¹ As in season 1800-1 Fidler does not mention his men by name in his official journal. According to B.39/a/2, fo. 93d. (see p. 295, n. 1), B.239/f/8, and B.239/f/9, fos. 6d.-14, Fidler again had eighteen men with him at Chesterfield House during season 1801-2, and again they were all Orkneymen. They have been identified as: William Park (steersman), John Ballenden 3rd (canoe man), Benjamin Bruce (steersman), Edward Brown (boatman), Oman Norquay (labourer), Malcolm Sinclair 2nd, William Tomison, Robert Flett and James Hay (boatmen), James Richan (labourer), Gilbert Budge (boatman), William Corrigal (? 1st the steersman, 2nd the boatman, or 3rd the labourer), Peter Corrigal (canoe man), George Garson (tailor, etc.), John Walls, Samuel Hourston and Robert Rendall (labourers), and Thomas Loutitt or Loutit (canoe man). Cf. the list for outfit 1800-1 on p. 269, n. 6.

² See p. 317, n. 1.

³ See p. 298. Arapaho Indians, who were formerly distinguished by blue tattoo marks on the breast. Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian. Being a series of volumes picturing and describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska* (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1911), Vol. VI, p. 158, n. 2.

October 6, Tuesday. Men's employ as yesterday. Indians busy ever since they came here making tents and dressing skins.

*October 7, Wednesday.*¹ Tailor making clothing for the men and the rest as before. Several Blackfeet pitched away and thirty-seven tents of Fall Indians came in. Last night the New Company's people all under arms, the Blackfeet being very troublesome for liquor and having nothing to trade.²

October 8, Thursday. Most all the Blackfeet and Blood Indians went away, and a few Fall Indians. Two men grooving posts for a new victual shed, and the rest as on Wednesday. Put all our beat meat upstairs to dry. The Indians brought a good many small foxes to trade which I would not take from them, they are so very indifferent as yet, and told them not to kill a single one more till the snow fell and their skins was white.³

October 9, Friday. Muddled the old victual shed and trading room. Last night most part of the Indians came within the Old Company's and New Company's stockades as they say that a great body of Stone Indians was seen near this, supposed to come to carry away horses or go to war; however it turned out to nothing. The rest of the men as before, coopering, tailoring, grooving posts, etc. etc. A few Blackfeet went away, very few of that tribe remaining here only about ten tents, the rest Fall Indians.

October 10, Saturday. Men's employ as yesterday and cleaned out the yard. A few Fall Indians went away.⁴

¹ There also exists in the Company's archives a 'rough' and, for the most part, fuller version of Fidler's Chesterfield House journal from 7 October 1801 to 20 April 1802. This covers fos. 2d.-24d. in a stiff-covered untitled manuscript in Fidler's writing, classified as B.39/a/2. His movements from the time he left Chesterfield House on 21 April until 7 August 1802 (when he started from Cumberland House for Lake Athabasca, where he built Nottingham House) can be followed from folios 24d.-31d. The remaining entries up to 15 June 1803, when he arrived back at Cumberland House, and until 11 August following when he was again en route to Lake Athabasca, cover folios 31d.-54. The remaining folios, 54d.-97d., and the inside back cover contain miscellaneous information including, 'YF List of Servants Inland 1802'; 'Nottingham House Athapescow Lake' Accounts, 1803; Astronomical and Meteorological Observations, Nottingham House; Meteorological Observations, Chesterfield House; and three sketch maps drawn at Chesterfield House (see p. 253, n. 1). This rough journal for 1801-3 was sent to England in 1922 when the Company began gathering in its outstanding post records. H.B.C. Archives London Inward Corres. File 17, Letter C.A.C. 1585, 30 September 1922. The official Chesterfield House journal (B.34/a/3) printed above was sent from York Factory to London by the ship of 1802 and was catalogued as No. 45 in A.64/52 (see p. lxxviii, n. 1). Fidler's official Nottingham House journal for 1802-3 (B.39/a/1) was entered as No. 75 in the same catalogue.

² In the rough version (B.39/a/2) this day's entry mentions alterations made in the trading-room, the servants' employment (including the making of leather jackets and trousers for the men), and that eight Fall Indian chiefs visited Fidler.

³ On fo. 96d. of his rough journal (B.39/a/2) under the heading 'Blackfoot Newspapers[?]' Fidler noted for 8 October 1801: 'Ne ten ni - middle aged - Feathers Gang; Ooch kin ni - do. - rather pockmarked Big Mans Gang; Chips no kis sta ki - mid. aged - F Mans Gang'.

⁴ Besides mentioning the work and alterations made in the fort under 10 October in B.39/a/2 Fidler included: 'Most part of the Blackfeet & fall Indn. Women & Children with a great many horses came

October 11, Sunday. A few Indians went away.

October 12, Monday. Two men¹ on hunting and brought home one bull, no cows to be seen, two men making kegs, two cutting firewood, one tailoring for the men, and the rest mudded the roof of the house, and otherways employed putting things in order about the house. Several Fall Indians went away.²

October 13, Tuesday. The last of the Fall Indians pitched away, only seven tents of Blackfeet upon the plantation. Men as before.³

October 14, Wednesday. Sent the Blackfeet across the river to hunt for us, they brought us six cows. Men variously employed. The leaves mostly all fallen off the poplars and willows.⁴

October 15, Thursday. Tradesmen at their duties and the rest finished grooving the posts for the victual shed, and got some logs to build it with. The Fall Indians that went away on Tuesday left a woman here that had been scalped by the Stone Indians in the summer, her scalp appeared like a dry bone that has been picked of the meat and exposed to the weather some time. She is to remain here till the middle of winter, when she is again to accompany them.⁵

October 16, Friday. All hands carrying in logs for the victual shed, and set up the posts and laid one tier of logs round it. A few Fall and Blackfeet Indians came in with dry provisions,⁶ a few of the Blackfeet that have been here so long went away.⁷

October 17, Saturday. Tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest employed putting up the victual shed. Three Fall Indians came in,

within Mr Belleus [North West Company] stockades and staid all night. They said that a number of Inds. were across the river last night, it only proved to be a frenchman & a Blackfoot who went ahunting for Mr Wills'.

¹ Benjamin Bruce and James Hay. B.39/a/2. Fidler made no reference in either version of his journal for 1801-2 to the behaviour of the servants, but Tomison instructed John Ballanden on 19 August 1802 not to renew James Hay's expiring contract because 'he behaved very ill to Mr Fidler last year which was likely to prove fatal to the whole'. B.239/b/72, fo. 20.

² The night watch of two men which had been kept up since 10 September was discontinued this night. B.39/a/2.

³ Fidler's entry in B.39/a/2 included references to the additions being made to the buildings, to the arrival of three young Fall Indians from 'the Chief at the Hill' (three nights' sleep away), and to trading a horse 'from Ke oo cus for a 20 skin Keg'.

⁴ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler mentioned that he sent five men with the Blackfoot hunters and also noted the work being done on the buildings.

⁵ See p. 317, n. 1. Fidler also 'Traded a good Horse from Na too pe gave a 15 skin & a gall. Keg'. B.39/a/2.

⁶ In B.39/a/2 Fidler wrote, '3 fall Ind. came in, and 6 Blackfoot Chiefs to our House with dry Provisions, they have been in before neither hoisted the flag or fired a gun for them, or gave them any liquor for nothing by reason of their being in so lately'.

⁷ Fidler added in B.39/a/2, 'Young men came from the feathers Gang they ret'd. with 5 pieces of tobacco, to be in in 4 or 5 nights'. *Ibid.*, fo. 97d., Fidler also noted for 16 October, 'Blackfoot Chiefs sent for Tobacco Naw u ko ki oo, Ki oo tach e sum, Ki oo tok ka che sum, Māk que oo suck koo, Men nam'.

the Blackfeet that came yesterday went away. Cleaned out the yard.¹

October 18, Sunday. Great numbers of cows came to the river to drink, which is a pleasant sight, as our provisions of late has not been very good.²

October 19, Monday. Carried in the last of the logs for the victual shed, afterwards the two coopers, two woodcutters and tailor at their respective jobs, the rest building the victual shed.³

October 20, Tuesday. Most part of the Blackfeet and Fall Indians went away, only one tent of each nation remaining here. One man along with the tailor sewing Indian coats, the rest except the tradesmen got the victual shed ready to put on the roof.⁴

October 21, Wednesday. Men variously employed.⁵

October 22, Thursday. Tradesmen at their duty and the rest got sticks to roof the shed with.

October 23, Friday. Put the roof on the victual shed.⁶

October 24, Saturday. Two on hunting and brought home two cows, the tradesmen at their respective duty, and the rest cleaned the yard and plantation and burnt the rubbish, chips etc. A Blackfoot chief came in called the Fatt Man,⁷ he is the most corpulent Indian in the five nations that trades at the inland settlements, being upwards of 6½ feet round the belly and otherways stout in proportion.

October 25, Sunday. Nothing particular.

October 26, Monday. Twelve Blackfeet chiefs came in, they have been at where Mr Hallett winters⁸ only about twenty days ago. They brought me a few lines from him telling us that the Old Company will not be here this year; we shall be under the necessity of pulling down their fort, to prevent any of the Indians harbouring in it and annoying us, as it is quite close to ours. Tradesmen at their respective jobs, and the rest employed about the victual shed.⁹

¹ Fidler added in B.39/a/2, 'gave How in naught tay 3¹Wifes a Knife Awl, paper of Paints & 3 In. of Tob. each their husband got killed by the Stone Indians this Summer, 28 killed their near the Mountain in all, at the Pines, 46 at the Pines'. See p. 293 and p. 317, n. 1.

² This day Fidler also recorded, 'went to the Knoll on N side . . . Grass on fire SS red Deers river near hand'. *Ibid.*

³ The tailor was making 'a fine blue Cloth Coat' for Fidler, and Oman Norquay(?) 'cut out 30 1-Skin & 20 2-Skin Coats' for the Indian trade. *Ibid.*

⁴ Fidler gave the men 'an allowance of Brandy, the first they have got this season'. *Ibid.*

⁵ Fidler and William Park took a ride across the river where they saw many buffalo cows and James Richan sewed 1-skin coats. The grass to the south of the Saskatchewan River was seen to be on fire. *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, fo. 97d. [note]: 'Oct. 23 Blackfoot Chiefs sent for Tobacco Ak ko mak ki - Feathers, Å poo ki oo, Six is cha pan, Chek coo cuy, Å kane stom, Kay e sux se, Ka at toose'.

⁷ O mok ā pee, Fatman., *Ibid.*, fo. 97d.

⁸ At Island House on the Saskatchewan. See p. lxxxiv; p. 195, n. 4; p. 302, n. 3; p. 303, n. 3.

⁹ Thirty tents of Blackfoot Indians arrived. One of the chiefs, The Feathers, was supplied by Fidler with a 2½-gallon keg of liquor and '¼ pt. of strong Liquor', and one Fall and two Tattooed Indians were given tobacco. The tailor was making a pair of yellow trousers for Fidler. B.39/a/2.

October 27, Tuesday. Four Muddy and six Blood Indian chiefs came in, they have very little with them.¹ Muddled the shed and hang the door.

October 28, Wednesday. Six tents of Blackfeet came in, they have a good number of small foxes which I would not trade from them as they are quite black and scarcely worth carriage, exclusive of the goods that would be given for them; therefore sent them all to the New Company with their skins. Laid the floor in the shed.²

October 29, Thursday. Great numbers of buffalo about the house. Set all hands to pull down the Old Company's fort, for our own preservation, to prevent evil minded Indians from lodging in it and put up a quarter of our stockades.³ Five Fall Indian chiefs came in, also the chief of that nation accompanied them – his character relating to his regard for Europeans are none of the best but on the contrary he is generally stirring his countrymen up against them.⁴

October 30, Friday. All hands as yesterday and finished that job.⁵ Two Fall Indians came in, and all the Blackfeet pitched away a little below the house; they are afraid of the Fall Indians.⁶

October 31, Saturday. Froze pretty hard last night. Three Tatood Indian chiefs came with their families consisting of four young men, five women and seven children: this is a part of a nation that never saw Europeans before. They inhabit on the eastern borders of the mountain far to the south of this, they have been forty-four days in coming, they speak nearly the same language as the Fall Indians and are at peace with them, who have escorted them here.⁷ They brought a few beaver skins with them but very ill coloured and badly dressed, they are a pretty numerous tribe amounting to about 90 or 100 tents. Their manners are different from the Fall Indians, but are nearly of the same size and features.

¹ Fidler told these Indians to take all their 'provisions' to the New Company as he then had about eighty bags. *Ibid.*

² In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler mentioned that some tents of The Feather's gang also arrived; that he traded a horse from Ackow we ak; that several young Fall Indians came in and awed the Blackfeet; and that three nights previously Big Man's gang had killed two Indians and drowned two children. See p. 299.

³ In his rough version (B.39/a/2) Fidler wrote, 'All hands took down a part of the french Stockades & put up as our inner stockades was too low, also took down the French Watch house & put up at the Corner of our Stockades'. The North West Company's post was re-established as New Chesterfield House by John McDonald of Garth in 1804, not 1805, as stated in his 'Autobiographical Notes' in L. R. Masson, editor, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1890), II, 30–31. McDonald's Hudson's Bay Company opponent during season 1804–5 was Joseph Howse. B.239/d/129, p. 166; B.239/b/71, fos. 18–19.

⁴ Fidler received a letter from Henry Hallett dated 4 October. B.39/a/2.

⁵ I.e. pulling down the North West Company's fort. *Ibid.*

⁶ A Tatooed Indian also arrived. *Ibid.*

⁷ The Tatooed Indians were escorted to Fidler and Wills by the Fall Indian, Red Deer. *Ibid.*

Some Blackfeet and the Muddy River Indians went away, also three Blackfeet came in. Took our boats within the stockades and cleaned the yard.¹

November 1, Sunday. The Fall Indians in conjunction with the Tatood Indians are very near falling upon the Blackfeet on account of the latter killing one man, one woman and two children of the Tatood Indians, a few days before they arrived at the house. However, through our interference the affair was amicably settled between them, after the Blackfeet had given many valuable presents to the Tatood Indians.²

November 2, Monday. Three men on hunting. Tradesmen at their several duties and the rest variously employed. One Blackfoot and two Fall Indians came in with furs, the foxes are now beginning to be pretty good. Ten Fall Indians came in yesterday with furs.

November 3, Tuesday. Tradesmen as usual and the rest laying a floor over the men's guardroom and cabins.³ Yesterday much ice driving in the Red Deers River, the first this season. Indians drinking.

November 4, Wednesday. Three men on hunting and brought home three bulls, all the cows the Indians have drove off. Upwards of fifty tents of Blackfeet pitched away to hunt foxes, also thirty-five tents of Fall Indians went away; before they went off, nearly all the whole nation was here at one time. Men's employ as before.⁴

November 5, Thursday. Several tents of Fall Indians pitched away. Both the Bad and Red Deers Rivers are full of ice. Pitched the cooking tent to cook the men's victuals in, two men opening the leaf tobacco to make carrot tobacco of, and the rest variously employed.

November 6, Friday. Men as before, Red Deers River set fast. Eight Fall Indians came in with furs. Several Fall Indians pitched away.⁵

November 7, Saturday. Cleaned the yard and warehouse and busily trading with the Indians that came lately. Received two buffalo from Indians whom I sent on hunting. I learn that a great many Blackfeet that are just left here will trade at the other river in the winter, as the Fall

¹ In B.39/a/2 Fidler ended the entry for this day, 'The feathers gave the fall Inds. two good Horses 3 days ago for the Bodys of the 2 fall Inds. his son killed the last february to make it up with them they are nearly falling upon the blackfeet'. See *supra*, p. 286.

² Fidler mentioned the deaths of the Tatood Indians under 31 October 1801 in B.39/a/2. The children were drowned 'by running into the river when the Blackfeet shot their Countrymen'. See p. 298, n. 2.

³ Flooring from the North West Company house was used. Before the Chesterfield House men were up that morning 'the New Cos. people carried away several pieces of it', but Fidler and his men made them bring it all back again. B.39/a/2.

⁴ The men's 'employ' included the making of 30 1-skin, 20 2-skin and 10 3-skin coats for trade. There had been no fresh meat in the fort for three days and all were living on 'Beat meat & fatt'. *Ibid.*

⁵ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler added, 'Traded a Slave girl abt. 6 years old, belongg. to Snake Indian parents gave 7 MBr. on the Compys. Standard'.

Indians are very near falling on them. The above circumstance will be a great loss of trade at this house this year.¹

November 8, Sunday. All the Fall Indians pitched away to kill furs.

November 9, Monday. Three men making carrot tobacco, obliged to untwist the *British brazil tobacco and mix* with the leaf, as the Indians *will not trade it; it is very bad*,² particularly the four rolls that we have opened. Two coopering, two cutting firewood and two making Indian clothing, the men variously employed. Two Fall Indians came in with a few furs.³

November 10, Tuesday. Five Muddy River Indians came into our house, but they have very little with them.⁴ Three men crossing our horses from the south to the north side of the river. Tradesmen as yesterday, three making candles, and the rest as before. Two Fall Indians came in with a little meat and few furs which they traded and immediately returned. It is the custom with these Indians to sleep only one night at the house in general, trade and return the next day. A Blackfoot also brought us three cows.⁵

November 11, Wednesday. The Muddy River Indians went away, they had only twenty-five made beaver amongst them. Men's employ as before, and heaving carrot tobacco. Employed a Blackfoot to hunt meat for us, and sent two men and our horses with him, to carry the meat to the tent.

November 12, Thursday. The Indians all of every tribe went away, so that there is not a single one remaining at the houses. Men as before.⁶

November 13, Friday. One man overhauling and cleaning the new trading guns,⁷ the men's employ as before.

November 14, Saturday. Men as before and cleaned out the yard.

November 15, Sunday. Our men came from the hunting tent. They say that the buffalo are numerous around them, they are tenting twelve miles

¹ Fidler killed two bulls and one goose(?). He recorded in B.39/a/2 that 'they [the Fall Indians] came again for the Slave Girl traded yesterday & delivered her up'.

² Underlined in pencil in MS, with finger in margin to direct attention.

³ That day, when looking for lost horses, Fidler killed three bulls. The work done included the erection of 'a Battery at the S Gates to fire the Musketoon from', and the making of candlewicks from old cotton sheets. B.39/a/2.

⁴ These Indians had been to Acton House where 'they say that they Trade very hard with them'. *Ibid.*

⁵ The weather at this time was 'clear and hot' and there was only a little ice driving down the Saskatchewan. B.39/a/2. It will be noticed that in compliance with the Committee's orders (p. lxxvii) of 1800 (which Fidler did not receive in time to obey during 1800-1) his official journal above omits daily references to the weather.

⁶ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler added, 'Went with Mr Wills to the Antiquity not an Indian here of any kind'.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Myself & Wm. Park examined all our 3½ feet guns & dress'd the locks of several, they are very much [*sic*] this year the varnish being off most of them'.

from the house. Two Blackfeet came in with a few furs which they trade only for liquor.

November 16, Monday. Men's employ as on Monday last. The men returned to the hunting tent.

November 17, Tuesday. Sent four men to kill bulls, to make line of to tie fur bundles with, they brought four home. The tradesmen always at their respective duties, and the rest doing necessary work about the house.

November 18, Wednesday. The rivers have been quite clear of ice these several days past. Men as usual.

November 19, Thursday. Two men went away to trap foxes, the rest as before.¹

November 20, Friday. Sent three men to kill bulls for their hides to make line of, they brought two skins home. Men's employ as before.²

November 21, Saturday. Yesterday our two men came home from the hunting tent with only one cow; the Indian is not at all thrifty in hunting, they returned this day. Cleaned the yard etc.

November 22, Sunday. *Yesterday* the two men that went to trap furs returned with but poor success,³ also finished making the greater part of our carrot tobacco. Several Blackfeet pitched to the house with very little with them.⁴

November 23, Monday. Three Blackfeet came in with furs.⁵ Tradesmen at their respective duties, and the rest variously employed, beating beat meat and finished heaving the carrot tobacco, made at present.

November 24, Tuesday. One Blackfoot and two Blood Indians came in. A young man, a Blackfoot, fired at another when sitting in our house but fortunately missed him, he was not five yards from him when he fired. In the evening three more Blackfeet came in with a few furs. Men's employ as before.⁶

November 25, Wednesday. Blood Indians traded and went away. Made three saddles to carry meat upon.

November 26, Thursday. Men variously employed. Sent our hunter

¹ Oman Norquay and John Warrs (Walls) went trapping. Other work included the turning over of 'back fats', the making of tobacco into carrots, and the cleaning and winnowing of Saskatoon berries. The quantity produced was fifty-one gallons. *Ibid.*

² In B.39/a/2 Fidler added, 'Told the feathers brother & one more man that came for nothg. to the House to make us 60 pemmican bags, to give them [the value of] 1 Beaver each & 200 Tongues to give them the value of 1 Beaver for 8'.

³ Oman Norquay and John Walls, who returned with two cows. *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, Fidler wrote, 'they [the Indians] say that they are frightened of the Far off Stone Inds. who they hear is coming to war against the Fall Inds., but I believe it a false story'.

⁵ One of the Blackfoot chiefs 'went into the new Compy., after getting all his Liquor Drams & Tob. at our house, went over to Mr Wills about it & the man Traded all here'. *Ibid.*

⁶ Fidler mentioned in B.39/a/2 that he finished making his 'drawing frame', that Feathers was one of the arrivals, and that it was Coo quy et to pe who escaped being shot.

with two men down the river where they can make a fire of wood, and to kill meat, where they have been before, no woods, only using buffalo dung for firing which is a poor substitute in cold weather.

November 27, Friday. One Fall and one Blood Indian came in with very little. Several Blackfeet pitched away to make a pound [MS: here and elsewhere in this journal: 'pond'], not six miles from the house. Men's employ the same.

November 28, Saturday. Three Blackfeet came in with a tolerable good trade, also four Fall Indians came in with furs. Men as usual.

November 29, Sunday. Both the Bad and Red Deers Rivers set fast last night, and men crossed them this morning. The Fall Indians that came yesterday and the Blackfeet went away.

November 30, Monday. Sent three men to kill bulls to make line of their hides, they brought two home, two making kegs, two cutting firewood and the two tailors making Indian clothing and for the men.¹ Our two men came home from the hunting tent with four cows.² The Indians also brought us six cows. The men variously employed about the house.

December 1, Tuesday. Tradesmen as usual, two sawing boards and the rest as before variously employed. Men returned to the hunting tent.³

December 2, Wednesday. Men came from the hunting tent with four cows. Men as on Monday.

December 3, Thursday. Four men making bags etc. to go for pitch, tomorrow. Traded five cows from Indians. Heavy rain this morning.

December 4, Friday. Sent four men⁴ to get pitch about eighty miles off at the I ah Kim me coo hill,⁵ no pines nearer this place. Sent a Blackfoot along with them as guide. Our hunter⁶ pitched to the house and paid him all off, as he is a very expensive man to employ and no hunter. Men at various duty.

December 5, Saturday. Sixteen Blackfoots came in, they have a pretty good trade. Tradesmen at their respective duties and the rest cut firewood.

¹ John Ballenden 3rd. *Ibid.*

² 'They drove them on to weak ice & broke in & they killed them with hatchets in the river'. *Ibid.*

³ Among other remarks in B.39/a/2 Fidler also added, 'Hot Weather & light breezes at SW, very little snow left. Wrote Letters to Messrs Tomison, Bird, Hallett, Pruden, Swain, Sutherland, Twatt, Howse & Linklatter dated 2d. Inst. as frenchmen are going across to Mr Halletts House'. Two of John Wills's men and a young Blackfoot left with the letters on 4 December. Neither originals nor copies have been traced. See p. 303, n. 3.

⁴ Malcolm Sinclair 2nd, William Tomison (boatman), Peter Corrigan and Thomas Loutitt. They went with 'the Bears Son [Little Bear] Belleus Hunter as pilot to give him 20 MBr.'. B.39/a/2, 4 and 8 December 1801.

⁵ Identified as the 'pine-clad Cypress Hills southeast of Medicine Hat' in J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto, 1966), p. 133.

⁶ Docked Bull. B.39/a/2.

December 6, Sunday. Indians busy trading and several of them went away. Five Fall Indians came in with furs.

December 7, Monday. Two men making kegs, two cutting firewood and two men at the tailor's business, which six men are constantly employed that way and will be so during the winter, and the rest employed doing various duty about the house. Most part of the Indians went away, only eight tents remain here.

December 8, Tuesday. All the Indians went away, only the pilot's family who conducts our men to the hill for pitch. Men as before.

December 9, Wednesday. Three Fall Indians came in with a few furs and three men making soap, the rest as before.

December 10, Thursday. On Tuesday evening two Canadians, belonging to the Old Company in the Saskatchewan River came here to the New Company's house. They have ran away, being left in care of nine pieces of goods that was laid in the ground until other men came to carry it to the house; they decamped after taking away four pieces, part they brought with them and the greater part they laid up to take at any future time.¹ Men's employ the same.

December 11, Friday. Two Fall Indians came in with very little. Men as before.

December 12, Saturday. Put our small bateau into the yard, cleaned out the yard and warehouse, and tying up skins. Three Fall Indians came in.

December 13, Sunday. The Fall Indians traded and went away, also gave the scalped woman a knife, awl and other small trifles, and sent her along with them.

December 14, Monday. Our four men that went for pitch returned with a sufficient quantity.² Tradesmen at their duty and the rest variously employed. Two Canadians set off with letters to the Island House in the Saskatchewan River³ to return about the middle of January.

December 15, Tuesday. Sent six men on hunting, they killed four cows. The rest as usual.

December 16, Wednesday. Twelve Blood Indians came in. Sent four men to fetch home the four cows killed yesterday. Indians also brought us five cows. Men's employ as before.

December 17, Thursday. Sent four men on hunting, they brought home

¹ They had deserted 'from the Long Reach below Buckingham'. *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, Fidler added, 'Our people found some Tattoo'd Inds. at the Pines, coming to the Fall Inds.'

³ See p. 302, n. 3. The two Canadians who had set off with letters on 4 December returned three nights later because their guide was afraid of meeting Stone Indians. Also, Fidler's rough journal entry for 14 December includes, 'the Canadians 2 men again went for the other river, also wrote an additional letter to Mr Hallett [at Island House]'. B.39/a/2.

three cows. Tailors, coopers, and woodcutters at their respective jobs, and the rest doing various duties about the house.

December 18, Friday. Men cut firewood. All the Blood Indians traded and went away, they had little with them.¹

December 19, Saturday. Tradesmen at their respective duties as usual and the rest getting logs to saw into boards to make a bateau of in the spring, to carry down provisions etc. Employed the Indian that accompanied our men to the hill for pitch, to hunt for us and sent two men along with him.² Blackfeet brought us the meat of nearly three cows. Five Fall Indians came in with furs.

December 20, Sunday. Fall Indians returned, they say that they will not go to war this winter but hunt furs well.

December 21, Monday. Tradesmen at their duties and the rest falling logs to saw into boards for a bateau.

December 22, Tuesday. Men as before, and got a sufficient quantity of logs. One Fall and two Tattooed Indians came in with very little, the former has been two years along with the latter, and is just now come.

December 23, Wednesday. Indians went away. Tradesmen as usual and all the rest made forty-one bags of pemmican of 76 lbs. each. Our men came home from the hunting tent, with one cow.

December 24, Thursday. Men as yesterday and made twenty-three bags of pemmican, no more fat remaining but plenty of beat meat. A Fall Indian came in with three beaver skins and a small beaver coat, which was taken from the Snake Indians³ this summer by the Crow Mountain Indians⁴ who are at war with them. The hunter came home for ammunition and returned, he is tenting four miles from the house.⁵

December 25, Friday. Indians traded and went away. A Blackfoot came in with the meat of nearly four cows and a few furs, which he traded and went away.⁶

December 26, Saturday. The two men at the hunting tent made two

¹ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler added, '2 young men fall Inds. came here Left 2 young women who they have carried away, they are going to Tent with the Feathers'.

² Little Bear (p. 302, n. 4), Thomas Loutitt and William Tomison (boatman) were the hunters. B.39/a/2.

³ *Ibid.*, Fidler gives the impression that it was a combined party of Fall, Crow and Tattooed Indians who killed the Snake Indians.

⁴ See John C. Ewers, editor, *Edwin Thompson Denig. Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri* University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), 'V: Of the Crow Nation', pp. 137-204.

The waistcoat made for Fidler this day (B.39/a/2) may have been one of the twenty-four listed as being in his chest on 8 July 1813. Fidler's 'Note Book', p. 44. See *supra*, p. 275, n. 5.

⁶ Fidler's Christmas Day entry in B.39/a/2 reads, 'Gave the men 1 dram of rum & $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of Engh. Brandy each. Indians traded & went away. 7 cows to fetch from the Tent. The Englishman [Indian] brot. us 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cows 16 Tongues & 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ MBr. & 4 bladders of fatt. The Feathers we hear is returned back to the pound to pound Buffalo, he & his gang will be pittiful all winter as last. Cold weather'.

trips to the house, they brought home ten cows, buffalo very plentiful in sight of the house. Stowed by the pemmican and tied up furs. A Fall Indian came in with a few foxes.

December 27, Sunday. Fall Indian went away. One of our men¹ killed seven cows near the house, got the lent of Indian horses and brought it all home. Received five cows from Indians.

December 28, Monday. Our men came home with five cows from the hunting tent. Tailor, woodcutters and coopers at their respective employs, and the rest variously employed, cut out some ice to lay our victuals up with for spring use.

December 29, Tuesday. Tradesmen as before, and the rest cutting and hauling up ice to put in our victual shed to preserve the meat in the spring. One Muddy River Indian came in with a few skins. Our men came home from the hunting tent with five cows and everything with them. I imagine that we shall have nearly enough meat to last us till the embarkation. The hunter also pitched to the house. Thousands on thousands of buffalo in sight from the house.

December 30, Wednesday. Stowed by amongst ice 198 quarters of buffalo to eat the latter part of the spring, the smaller pieces of meat to use while the weather is cold. An Indian² brought three cows. Three Fall Indians came in with furs.

December 31, Thursday. A Blackfoot brought five cows to us which we refused taking as we shall have enough without it, *sent him to the New Company.*³ Tradesmen at their duties cleaned out the yard and about the house. Thick drift, snowy bad day.

January 1, 1802, Friday. The Fall Indians went away. Two Blackfeet came in with furs.⁴

January 2, Saturday. Tradesmen at their duty and the rest cutting firewood.

January 3, Sunday. Indians went away.

January 4, Monday. Coopers, tailor and two woodcutters as usual. Two looking for our horses, the rest cleaned the yard etc. and cut ice to put into the victual shed.

January 5, Tuesday. Men as before, and cut a sufficient quantity of ice out of the river to lay up the remainder of our provisions with.

¹ Benjamin Bruce. B.39/a/2.

² Father-in-law of the 'Englishman'. Marginal entry: 'since 1 December we have Traded & killed by Hunters 73 Cows', *Ibid.*

³ Underlined in pencil in MS, with finger in margin to direct attention to this passage. In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler wrote, 'the Feathers came in last night with meat 5 Cows to Mr Wills, he returned this day'.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Fidler added to his entry on New Year's Day, 'Men fired [at targets] at ours & the French House, gave the Men 1 pint of Engh. brandy each'.

January 6, Wednesday. Tradesmen as usual and the rest brought up the ice from the river.

January 7, Thursday. Men variously employed.

January 8, Friday. Stowed by the last of our meat. Our hunter pitched away to hunt furs. A small party of Blackfeet¹ returned from war, they happened to meet five Snake Indians² coming this way as is supposed to steal horses; they killed four of them and the other escaped but without his proper clothing, and they suppose the cold will kill him, as severe weather followed directly after. They found them about 100 miles from where the Blackfeet left their tents.³ They say that the greater part of the Blackfeet men are assembling from all quarters and will proceed again to war. We have used every method to dissuade them from their designs and to keep here and hunt furs, but they seem not to pay the least notice to our remonstrances but are absolutely bent on going. The above circumstance will be a great loss in trade at this house this year as the young men kill nearly all the furs the Indians have to trade. The old men does nothing but kill meat and spend their time in the tents in play and other acts of indolence, and cannot persuade themselves to be the least industrious.

January 9, Saturday. Cleaned out the yard, cut firewood, and the tradesmen at their respective duties.

January 10, Sunday. Put our horses under the care of our late hunter⁴ as we have now nothing to do with them, and they kept two men constantly looking after them.

January 11, Monday. Four men hewing logs and sawing boards to make a bateau. Tradesmen at their usual duty, and the rest variously employed cutting up back fats to melt etc.⁵ Millions of buffalo all round the house not $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off, and from a high eminence the ground is black quite round to a great distance.

January 12, Tuesday. Two Blackfeet came in with furs. Men as yesterday.

January 13, Wednesday. Men as before. The Blackfeet went away.⁶

January 14, Thursday. Men's employ the same. Three Blood Indians

¹ Seventeen in number. *Ibid.*

² Crow Mountain Indians. *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 'they met them near here [Chesterfield House] 1 days journey beyond the Pines where they fell in with their Tracks'.

⁴ Little Bear. B.39/a/2. In this rough journal Fidler also remarked that the snow was eight to ten inches deep.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Fidler also noted, 'On Friday finished cutting the last of our line, we have now about 1050 fathoms [1 mile, 340 yards]'.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Fidler added, '8 gave tobacco to 2 fall Inds. yesterday to be here tomorrow, they got 50 Buffalo into the pound yesterday, the Pound is about 12 miles off'.

came in with a few furs, they have come a great way off high up the Bad River.¹

January 15, Friday. Three Fall Indians came in with furs.² They say that the whole nation is at three pounds and that they are not hunting furs scarcely at all, being quite downcast on account of the Stone Indians falling in with them in the summer and killing such numbers of them, therefore little prospects of trade may be expected from them this season. The Blood Indians went away. Men's employ as before.

January 16, Saturday. Men as before. The Fall Indians went away.

January 17, Sunday. Two Fall Indians came in with very few furs.

January 18, Monday. The Fall Indians went away. Tradesmen as usual. Four men hewing logs and sawing boards, and the rest melting fat etc. of the back fats they have been cutting up this last week.³

January 19, Tuesday. Men's employ as yesterday.⁴

January 20, Wednesday. Last night three Fall Indians came in with a few furs, traded and went away this morning. Put up a tent for Indians to remain in all night when they come here to trade, and the rest variously employed.⁵

*January 21, Thursday.*⁶ Men as before and finished melting the fat.

January 22, Friday. Made sixteen bags of pemmican⁷ of 76 lbs. each as usual.

January 23, Saturday. Tradesmen at their several duties and the rest cleaned out the yard and cut firewood.

January 24, Sunday. Nothing particular.

January 25, Monday. Tradesmen as usual, four at the saw, and the rest tying up skins and doing necessary work about the house. Early this morning several Blackfeet young men again returned from war to the number of upwards of seventy. The rest amounting to upwards

¹ B.39/a/2 continues, '32 Tents of them & 21 of Muddy River Indians . . . Ben [Bruce] on Hunting & killed 2 cows above the Bank, did not take any of them'.

² B.39/a/2 continues, 'we hear that all the blackfeet young men that went to war lately have all returned, finding the Snow too deep . . . Sent by the 2 blood Inds. 1 fm. of Tob. for Cotton a hâw pe to distribute amongst the Muddy river Inds., as they intend all coming here, they say that the Snow is much too deep to go to the other river'.

³ The men's work is given in greater detail in B.39/a/2 and mention is also made there of the 'French' using the Company's saw-pit to prepare wood for a bateau.

⁴ Fidler wrote in B.39/a/2, 'A fall Ind. yg. man came over the stockades last night, reprimanded him severely this morning for it. This is the first that have come over ever since we first came here last year . . . Traded A Fidle made here from the Canadians gave 2 Quarts of Brandy'.

⁵ Benjamin Bruce was hunting buffalo bulls for the 'French'. *Ibid.*

⁶ B.39/a/2 includes, 'Thick snow in the mg. & warm, afternoon Strong Gale at NbE with very thick drift & very cold. Ben on Huntg. & killed 1 Cow on S Side, the Englishman brot. it upon his Horses'.

⁷ Saskatoon berries had been added to the meat. *Ibid.* This rough version also mentions that there were many buffalo 'across at the rivers edge'.

of fifty men returned short some few days ago finding the snow too deep to proceed. This party fell in with ten Snake Indians about forty miles above our house at the edge of the Bad River. On the Blackfeet's first discovering them in the daytime they immediately hid themselves in two holes in the ground where bears formerly had taken up their winter's abode;¹ the Blackfeet in the night by the light of the moon tracked them into their retreats and for some time endeavoured to allure them out of their fastnesses by promises of mercy, to which they paid not the least notice. Then the Blackfeet got small wood and made a fire near the mouth of each hole, and smoked them out. In a little while after the smoke became strong they rushed all out of the two holes, supposing it to be better chance of some escaping than when confined in the hole when they all must inevitably have been smothered. Two out of the ten escaped to relate the affair to their countrymen. They had two of our old guns with them of the date of 1790 Wilson.² They was supposed also to be coming this way to steal horses. Three Blackfeet got wounded and one shot through the body, but not mortal.³

January 26, Tuesday. Men's employ as yesterday.⁴

January 27, Wednesday. A very heavy gale sprung up in the night with snow and continued with unabating violence the whole day, the high wind and the quantity of snow continually falling together with the severe cold made such drift that it was absolutely impossible to look against the wind for half a minute, and so thick was the driving snow that a person could not see 100 yards from him in any direction. I never saw such a bad day in the country before these thirteen years past in no place, an old Indian here says that he never saw such a bad day before. Coopers and tailor⁵ at their duty, and the rest did nothing.

January 28, Thursday. Tradesmen as before and the rest cleaned the snow out of the yard.

January 29, Friday. Men making soap for themselves.

January 30, Saturday. Men as before. Very severe weather these four days past. An Indian came here, says that the two Canadians that left this last month, who went to the Saskatchewan River with letters are arrived

¹ Pencil'd finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage.

² William Wilson of 154 Minories, London. *Kent's Directory* . . . 1789 . . . (London, 1789).

³ Fidler reported more fully on the casualties in B.39/a/2 saying, 'one Blackfoot got shot thro the breast, with a ball, 1 in the arm & one in the Cheek with arrows, but only slightly, also one woman got an arrow into her Backside, one more blackfoot got 3 arrows into his coat but did not hurt him. Also one came to close quarters with a Snake Indn. & killed him with his Knife, the Snake Ind. having nothing of the kind to defend himself with'.

⁴ 'Fine warm weather & Nly. Calm'. *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 'On Saturday Jas. Richan finished making 18 Chiefs Coats & on Tuesday Began the Feathers Coat & finished it this day, the Taylor making me a red Coat'.

at his tent, but so much froze in their feet that he supposes that they will lose all their toes and the greater part of their feet.¹

January 31, Sunday. The two Canadians was brought upon horseback from our hunter's tent and it appears true what the Indian told last night. They say that they have not been able to make any fire since the 27th and for the last two nights and one day have been obliged to keep walking on. Had they laid down to rest they would never have risen again. They perceived their feet froze and solid one day and night before they arrived at our hunter's tent. They had no guide with them; had they had one, they had sufficient time to have arrived here before the late severe weather came on. It is a journey of four days from the nearest woods to the house.

February 1, Monday. Two Fall Indians came in with a little fat and a few tongues, they say that two Fall Indian men when out trapping got froze to death the 27 instant and that another very narrowly escaped; all their tents was blown over and several of the children was very near perishing through cold; they could not even offer to put up their tents again until the storm was over; they could not make any fire. The late severe weather has killed upwards of eighty of their horses, and the Stone Indians carrying away 114 in the summer, have made them very ill off for them.² All these losses and misfortunes coming upon them so soon after each other has a great deal soured their dispositions, which before this late affair was nearly upon a balance whether to do good or bad. Coopers, tailors and two men as usual, and the rest making soap for themselves.

*February 2, Tuesday.*³ Men's employ as before. The Fall Indians went away except one man.

February 3, Wednesday. Men as yesterday and cut firewood.

February 4, Thursday. Men's employ the same.⁴

February 5, Friday. Men employed as on Wednesday.⁵

February 6, Saturday. Cleaned the yard. Four at the saw cutting boards to make a bateau. Tradesmen as usual.

February 7, Sunday. Nothing particular.

February 8, Monday. Four men sawing. Tailors making caps to rig

¹ P. 303, n. 3. Among miscellaneous information on fo. 94d. at the end of Fidler's rough journal (B.39/a/2) is the entry, 'For 2 of the New Cos. Men, that got froze, to charge 1 beaver each box 1802 6 Boxes of Salve March 30th 1 Do. April 6 1 Do. Pd. [13 April]'.

² See p. 317, n. 1, where the number of horses carried away is given as 174.

³ 'Warm weather'. B.39/a/2.

⁴ B.39/a/2 adds that Benjamin Bruce and Robert Flett 'went to look at our horses at the Bears Tent', and that Fidler had, on the previous day, given 'Mr Wills 5 fathoms of Tobacco for bringing our Letters from the Island House'. Neither originals nor copies of the letters received by Fidler have been traced.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Thousands of Buffalo on the face of the bank on SS. . . . Snow most part of the day'.

Indian chiefs with, as we have very few hats. Some making soap and the rest variously employed, coopers at their work.

February 9, Tuesday. Three Blackfeet came in with a few foxes upon their backs. They say that the snow is so very deep that the horses cannot get through it, and that many of them die on account of the great depth of snow, not being able to scrape the snow away and maintain themselves. They also say that for the above cause the Indians cannot trap, what few there are to do it, the snow being so deep, with the almost continual gales of wind, that the traps are no sooner set, than they are drifted up. Men's employ as before and finished sawing the boards for the bateau. Our hunter came to the house and tell us that two of our horses is killed by the cold and deep snow and that several of the Blackfeets have shared the same fate.

February 10, Wednesday. Warm weather, thermometer 40+ . Cleaned the snow off the houses, to prevent its melting and running through and spoiling the furs etc. Tradesmen as before. Several Fall Indians came in with only twenty foxes amongst them all.

February 11, Thursday. Tradesmen as usual and the rest variously employed.

February 12, Friday. Two men sawing thafts for the bateau, the tradesmen as usual, and the rest falling trees near the house.¹

February 13, Saturday. Cleaned the yard etc.

February 14, Sunday. A very thick fog and rime.

February 15, Monday. Coopers, tailors² and woodcutters at their respective duties, the rest cut firewood and got a log to saw into gunwales for the bateau. Several Fall Indians went down the river to trap foxes etc. on both sides. Three Fall Indians came for tobacco, they have not been at the house since long before the rivers froze over and now has not got ten made beaver each; they returned.

February 16, Tuesday. Three men making pitch, three opening the last bundle of leaf tobacco to make into carrots, four men sawing gunwales for the bateau. Tradesmen as usual.

February 17, Wednesday. Men's employ as yesterday and finished sawing the gunwales. Employed an Indian to go to the other river³ to learn what quantity of pemmican they have there, as I hear by Mr Wills, the New Company's master, that they are badly off, and to know whether or not it is true; if so for us here to make whatever we can for summer use

¹ The trees obstructed Fidler's view across the river. *Ibid.*

² The tailors were working for Gilbert Budge and making a waistcoat for Fidler. *Ibid.*

³ The Indian was Ackow week and by him Fidler sent letters to Messrs Bird, Pruden, Howse and Hallett. He was paid to the value of fifty made beaver. *Ibid.*

as we have four months ago refused to trade any dry provisions, having made what pemmican I had orders to make.¹

February 18, Thursday. Finished melting the pitch, began again to make carrot tobacco. Tradesmen as usual. The Indian went away early this morning to go to Edmonton House with a letter to the master there.²

February 19, Friday. Six men employed making and heaving the carrot tobacco, the rest at other jobs.

February 20, Saturday. Several Fall Indians came to the rest that have been here some time; they are tenting about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the house. There is about sixty tents there in the whole.³

February 21, Sunday. *Yesterday* some few Fall Indians came in to trade, which was impossible to satisfy. I believe they have a determination to try whether or not they can get our goods for nothing;⁴ in general through *this* winter they have been very bad to deal with, compared with years past, which in our opinions is a prelude to their openly attacking us. Early this morning the New Company's master came over and told me that three or four Fall Indians rapped at their gates about midnight and wanted admittance, which was granted. When the gates was open upwards of seventy Fall Indian men all well-armed rushed into the yard and choked up the men's house nearly. All the Canadians was obliged to arm and was very near firing upon the Fall Indians in the house; when they saw that several of them must inevitably fall, they all thought proper to go away without doing any kind of violence. We also all armed at our house, and to keep a constant watch in case of a surprisal. This morning two Canadians came here, belonging to the Old Company, they are come from the mouth of this river which place they left 23d January; also fourteen Irroque Indians and two more Canadians accompanied them.⁵ When they

¹ See p. 298, n. 1; p. 305; p. 318.

² Fidler's rough journal (B.39/a/2) adds, 'Traded a Snake Ind. young woman from the Fall Indians'. *Ibid.*, fo. 96, among the miscellaneous notes, he wrote, 'Gave for a Slave young Woman abt. 19, a Snake Ind. taken by the Crow mountain Inds. in the Summer & given to the Ne heit thin nā che be, Gun 3½ ft. 1, Tob. brazil 2 fathoms, Blanket 3 pt., 1½ yards of red Corded Cloth, Ball 50, Powder 1½ pint, Knife yew handle 1, Tents 2, Paint 2 papers, Awl 1, worm 1, Rings Stone 16, rigged her with 1½ yds. red corded cloth, ½ yd. for Stocking & a pair of Sleeves. Returned'.

³ B.39/a/2 continues, 'The Fall Inds. took the Slave woman back again'.

⁴ Pencil finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage.

⁵ In the rough and earliest version of his journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler said that the Canadians 'were intended to go to the Hill where we got pitch to kill Beaver 1 Canadian is to remain here & go down with us in the spring, he is come to take up their goods that they left [en cache] all summer, the other 3 was to accompany the Irroques to kill Beaver'. In the third version (E.3/2, pp. 122-41) of the first part of his 1800-1 Chesterfield House journal (B.34/a/2, printed *supra*, pp. 253-91), which he revised at a later date (p. 253, n. 1), Fidler remarked in the entry for 20 September 1800, that the Canadians and Iroquois came up the South Saskatchewan in March [January] 1802 to kill beaver, having been wrongly informed that these animals were plentiful in the area. Fidler concluded this very lengthy revised entry by saying that the two Canadians who arrived at Chesterfield House on 21 February 1802 remained there all spring. See p. 314.

came within six days walk of our house, four Irroquis and the two Canadians came ahead to make friends with the Fall Indians. The day before they came to the house which was Saturday a small party of Fall Indians killed two of the Irroques who went to their tents to give presents and make friends. The two Canadians and other two Irroques came forward (not knowing the fate of the other two men) and slept in some Blackfeet tents only four miles from our house, who are very friendly to them. The two Canadians left the Blackfeet tents and arrived safe here. The two Irroques gave several presents to the Fall Indians, and they said that they was very sorry for killing the two men and that they might go to the house with great safety, and further that they would conduct them safe thither; but they had not left the Blackfeet tents above $\frac{1}{2}$ mile when they was killed and scalped also by the Fall Indians, and their bodies very full of stabs.¹ Such is their behaviour and manners that when they appear to be well pleased and satisfied they have the most rancorous revenge lurking in their minds.

*February 22, Monday.*² Several Fall Indians came to the house to trade, but we would not let a single man in.³ This is done with the intent that they may not fall upon the other ten Irroques and two Canadians, who are expected here daily. Gave the Fall Indian chiefs a big keg of liquor and one fathoms of tobacco to let the others come in safe to the house, which they solemnly promise to do. Some Blackfeet came in and says that they had buried the two Irroques last killed but that the Fall Indians had pulled them up again and cut off their hands and feet and brought to their tents which is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off.⁴ Tradesmen at their respective jobs and the rest variously employed. Several tents of Blackfeet pitched to the house.⁵

February 23, Tuesday. The Blackfeet that came yesterday traded. Finished making the last of our carrot tobacco⁶ and the tradesmen at their respective duty, and the rest variously employed.⁷

¹ Pencil finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage.

² In B.39/a/2 Fidler wrote, "This Day gave every man a bayonet, for Close quarters should the fall Inds. be daring enough to attack us, they got guns last night with $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of Powder & 20 Ball each man . . . went to look for the french goods laid up last Summer, but the Snow is too deep to find the Swivel gun as it is laid up seperately from the rest of the things'.

³ Fidler's reason is better expressed in B.39/a/2, 'we told them that when the other 10 Irroques & 2 Canadians came here that they will be admitted into the house & Trade as usual. This is done with the intent of keeping the fall Indians from falling upon the other Irroques, as they are very much irritated at present by the great losses they have met with in the Summer & this Winter'.

⁴ See p. 313, n. 2.

⁵ B.39/a/2 continues 'till this Storm is over, traded a little Liquor with them & they all got drunk, one man stabbed A kane stom in the shoulder but not mortal, he is likely soon to get better. The blackfeet that came last night Traded 6 guns'.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 'finished making up the carrot Tobacco 63 small ones out of 72 lb. of Leaf 43 lb. of roll & 14 lbs. of Bad brazill'.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 'The fall inds. early this mornng. sent messages to know whether or not they would be

February 24, Wednesday. Men at their several duties.

February 25, Thursday. Sent four men¹ and the New Company four also, to bury the two Irroques that was killed nearest the house. In the evening they returned, they say that they have been used in the most shocking and barbarous manner, being nearly cut to pieces: since the Blackfeet had buried them, the Fall Indians had hauled them up again and used them in that manner.² This morning a number of Fall Indians came to trade which we did trade with them as usual, after they had solemnly promised to let the other two Canadians and ten Irroques arrive safe. They also appeared much downcast at what they had before done.

February 26, Friday. Finished heaving our carrot tobacco, and the rest variously employed.

February 27, Saturday. Several Fall Indians came to trade. We admitted in only two or three at a time, and when they had done trading we let them out and others came in; we cannot put that confidence in them now that we have hitherto done. The whole nation of the Fall Indians³ are now assembled together and are tenting about three-quarters of a mile from the house. Cleaned out the yard and attending the gates.

February 28, Sunday. Busy all day trading with the Fall Indians. Let no men in but what wanted to trade. Four Blackfeet young men came for tobacco for thirteen chiefs.

March 1, Monday. Fifteen Blackfeet chiefs came in. The Fall Indians busy trading. The Tatood Indians all assembled about the house with guns etc. to kill some of the Blackfeet in revenge for the death of one man, one woman and two children, which was killed by them last fall. Through our interference the affair was amicably settled without bloodshed, by the Blackfeet giving large presents. Several of the Fall Indians are going away, they say to kill furs. Tradesmen at their respective duties and the rest variously employed.

March 2, Tuesday. Fall Indians and Blackfeet traded, the latter had admitted into the Houses, we told them when the French & Irroques arrived safe that they should come in & trade as usual Nā che be & Bess che thā tā went into Mr Wills & Kate thak ki came here in the middle of the day to make up all past faults. Nā che be & Oth ot ten are the sole cause of the 2 Irroques being killed & scalped on Sunday, they deserve exemplary punishment a fall Ind. arrived at the tents here in the middle of the night from below, he say the other Irroques & 2 Canads. on the road, he says that they will be here tomorrow. Gave Kate thak ki a foot of Tobacco & a Dram, as he is the best Ind. I believe that is at present here. A kas kin is expected here in 2 or 3 Days, the Snow is so verry deep that he is obliged to make short pitchings'.

¹ Benjamin Bruce, Malcolm Sinclair 2nd, Robert Flett and James Hay, who were accompanied by the two North West Company Canadians and three XY Company men. Fidler and Wills each provided a new three-point blanket. The murdered men were buried 'opposite a little Island about 4 miles below the House'. B.39/a/2; E.3/2, p. 139.

² Fidler went into far greater detail in B.39/a/2.

³ The later (third) version of his journal entry for 20 September 1800 (E.3/2, p. 139) adds, 'the Whole nation being above 600 able Warriors'.

only from two to five made beaver each, in the evening they pitched away. Men as before.

March 3, Wednesday. At 2½ a.m. the watch gave the alarm that all the Fall Indians was coming to attack us,¹ when immediately all hands was under arms in the bastions, but it proved that they was going down the river to meet the ten Irroques and two Canadians to kill them; it was absolutely not in our power to prevent it. At 3 p.m. to the number of 200 men and more, returned, they kept on the opposite side of the river and did not come near us. Our hunter a Blackfoot² being at the house, we sent him to them and he spoke with several of the Fall Indians, and they said that they had killed the ten Irroques and two Canadians about sixteen miles from the house, and they told him that had we all been there belonging to both houses they would have served us the same. They carried the scalps of the poor men on the end of poles when they passed the houses in a very insulting manner,³ signifying that ere long they would have ours also. Things having this black and dangerous appearance, the Canadian master asked leave to come with his men and everything else within our works, which I granted,⁴ that we might be the stronger together to oppose any attempt they might make upon us, the two houses being too far asunder to render either side any assistance to the other. Gave him our keg shed and coopers shop to put his things into, and to pitch tents in the yard for the men to sleep into.

March 4, Thursday. Early this morning the French got everything over to our house, and we set fire to their house and cut down the stockades that the Fall Indians might not harbour there and annoy us when we went for water. The French are sixteen able men besides two that got their feet froze in the winter. We are nineteen besides the two Canadians⁵ belonging to the Old Company, so that we are thirty-seven in all, and I hope they will not be daring enough to attack us now we are altogether in one fort.

March 5, Friday. Yesterday several Fall Indians came to see the French house on fire, but not one ventured near us. This day two men came to our house, and to learn when we would admit them to trade, we stopped to

¹ Pencilled finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage.

² Little Bear. B.39/a/2.

³ Fidler gave a lengthy and detailed account of the murders in his rough journal, B.39/a/2. The third version (E.3/2, pp. 122-41) of the first part of his 1800-1 Chesterfield House journal (B.34/a/2 printed *supra*, pp. 253-91), which he revised at a later date (p. 253, n. 1), includes in the entry for 20 September 1800, 'every one of which was scalped & several they cut to pieces limb from limb, their Nose, Private parts, & mangled them in the most Shocking manner . . . they hung their scalps upon long poles & all passed up the river near the house singing & dancing, some of them was even eating the part of the heart of one. They Pillaged those they killed of 1 Keg of Powder, 70 lbs. of Ball & 60 lbs. of Short, upwards of 50 Steel Traps & all their Guns & other articles'.

⁴ Pencilled finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage.

⁵ See p. 311.

trade with them on the 3d instant when we found that they was fully bent on killing the Irroques; but whether we traded or not traded with them, and notwithstanding the presents we gave them and the very fine promises they made us, they seem from the first fully determined to massacre them. The Fall Indians that came in, we told that we should not speak to them; but when several of the great chiefs came in, then we should speak to them and not before.

March 6, Saturday. Two more Fall Indians we let in, we told them as before. In the afternoon a great number of Fall Indians armed came to the house, with some inferior chiefs,¹ whom we would not admit, and we had some difficulty in keeping the Canadians from firing upon them from the bastions. We told them that when six of the greatest chiefs came in we would speak to them; we mentioned the names of those that we well knew had been the principal cause of their killing the Canadians and Irroques. The first plan was to kill the six chiefs and hang the great chief,² and kill about thirty others that we should let in; this was the plan of the Canadian master, but we afterwards thought it the most prudent part to let them alone and trust to the issue of the affair. Had we killed a number of them we had good reasons to expect that they might lurk about and attack us at the embarkation or else on our passage down. We don't in the least dread them while at the house.

March 7, Sunday. Not an Indian came within sight of the house although they promised that the six chiefs we mentioned should come here this day. By our mentioning their names they appear doubtful that we have some black design against them.

March 8, Monday. A number of Fall Indians came to the house all armed, with two chiefs,³ but only one of those we mentioned by name. We admitted thirty men in but disarmed them all. We questioned them much for their reasons in killing the ten Irroques and two Canadians on Wednesday last. At first they said that the young men had slipped away slyly without the least knowledge of the chiefs, which we well knew to be an arrant falsehood, and by our looks and words, they thought that if they did not explain themselves more to the purpose, we might fall upon them, which our behaviour seemed to indicate to them. They then said that it had from the first been their fixed determination to kill the Irroques, as they well knew from their hair and heads that they was not Europeans, notwithstanding we had said and done everything in their favour to let

¹ Including 'the Crow & Bears head' who brought 'their pipes to make it up', Fidler supposed. B.39/a/2.

² Pencilled finger in margin of MS directs attention to this passage. 'A kas kin the Great Chief'. B.39/a/2.

³ Kate thak ki and A kas kin. *Ibid.*

them come to the houses safe, but I believe they did not intend to kill the two Canadians, at least the chiefs; but the party sent to kill the Irroques consisted entirely of young men without ever a chief of note among them. They say that they brought the Canadians a considerable way on this side where they killed the Irroques, and was intended to bring them safe to the house, but some of the wild young men shot one and then the other.¹ They say that they did not take off their scalps or the least cut them. I offered the chief twenty made beaver to accompany myself and a few men to bury the two Canadians as they said it was near the house where they lay; they promised to come in the morning to accompany me.² Traded with them as usual, but admitted only a few in at a time and that without any arms of any kind. The Fall Indians appears to be much hurt at our sending for the Blackfeet and other nations³ of Indians to form a party against them to cover us at the time we embark. The Fall Indians make us very fair promises and plenty of them, that we have not the least to dread from them, but we cannot sincerely trust them. This is the same people that plundered Manchester House in 1793 of every article, and who attacked the South Branch House in the spring following, and murdered every man woman and child at it, took everything of goods, which was considerable, and burnt the house to ashes. One of the New Company traders⁴ told Mr Wills in a private manner that the intentions of A Kas Kin, the chief of the nation, was not well inclined towards us on account of the death of his brother who was shot at the South Branch House by the Canadians at the same time that they destroyed ours. He was carrying fire to set fire to the house when he was shot; when he fell they all desisted and went away crying. The smallpox being among them this last summer, which swept away the greater part of the young race; and also the Stone and Cree Indians falling upon them in the summer in two separate places; and the very severe winter which several got froze to death besides nearly all their horses dying in consequence of those that remained after the Stone Indians swept away with much above 100: all the above causes probably have sharpened and soured their former vindictive disposition and have been the reason of their killing the Irroques. These Irroques was coming up with three Canadians freemen⁵ to hunt beaver at the I e Kim me coo hill about seventy or eighty miles from our house, to the southwards of the Bad River, and when the time of embarkation was at hand to have come to the house and made wood canoes and gone down this river and kill beaver; such was their intentions when they left the Old Company's settlement near the junction of this and the Saskatchewan

¹ 'Ben ā thā chee net was the first man that shot the Canadians'. *Ibid.*

² Blo od and Muddy River Indians. B.39/a/2.

⁴ A Fall Indian. *Ibid.*

² See p. 317.

⁵ P. 311, n. 5.

Rivers the 23d of January. They only came this summer from Montreal.¹

March 9, Tuesday. The Fall Indian chief² that promised me to accompany us to go and bury the two Canadians did not arrive which gives us reason to suppose that they have been killed along with the Irroques and scalped and used in that shocking manner. Two men cutting firewood, two cooeping, one making Indian clothing, and the rest variously employed. The great losses the Fall Indians suffered in the summer by disease and war have preyed upon them much, and this whole winter they have done very little in hunting furs; the deep snow and very severe weather have also prevented the Blackfeet from making any. The Fall Indians say that they will make a good spring hunt, but by the stories that the Blackfeet tells them, that when the ground is clear of snow they may [MS: 'make'] expect another visit from the Stone and Cree Indians, their inveterate enemies: those stories probably may drive them with their families far away and will not hunt any more this spring.

March 10, Wednesday. Two men making Indian clothing, two cut firewood, two making kegs, and the rest getting cross pieces, wedges and mallets for the press. The Fall Indian chief and ten men came here for meat, gave them a little. I pressed him hard to fetch the two Canadians that was killed, but he would not listen to any such thing although I offered him twenty made beaver in goods.³

March 11, Thursday. Men's employ as yesterday.⁴

March 12, Friday. Sent a Stone Indian to see whether or not that the two Canadians was killed along with the Irroques, as we cannot believe the Fall Indians. In the evening the Indian returned, and found that the

¹ In the third version (E.3/2, pp. 122-41) of the first part of his 1800-1 Chesterfield House journal (B.34/a/2, printed *supra*, pp. 253-91), Fidler accounted for the outrageous behaviour of the Fall Indians in February and March 1802 (in his entry for 20 September 1800) as follows: 'what raised the resentment of the Fall Inds. so very much was that the Summer 1801, The Southern & Stone Indians had made war upon them, killing 76 men women & Children, in two different places up towards the Stony Mountain in the Moocoowans river, & at the I e kim me coo hill, they also scalped 3 who they took for dead two Children about 10 years old and a middle aged woman, who survived & came to our house afterwards [15 October 1801] . . . The Small pox the same spring [1801] also came amongst them from the Southwards towards the Mississoury river, & cut off 100 principally of Children, & fortunately it did not spread amongst other Indians. Also that winter [1801-2] being uncommonly severe with deep snow, that a few of them lost their lives by the severity of the weather when out in the Planes trapping small foxes, also a heavy & sudden Snow in May 12 and 13 1801 [p. 290, n. 1] which killed above 100 of their horses & the Enemy besides went away with 174 such was the causes that irritated them to that degree as to kill all the Irroques & 2 Canadians'.

² Kate thak ki. B.39/a/2.

³ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler added, 'also told him that we expected a large band of Stone Inds. with Crees, when the Snow is off the ground to war against them, perhaps it may drive them far off, as I much wish it that they may not waylay us in the Spring'. Fidler was also visited on 10 March by Feathers and his brother.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 'I began to copy my draft [map] from YF to Ed. Ho. for Mr Ballenden [of York Fort] also from Buckg. to the Rocky Mountain for Mr Lean [Secretary, H.B.C., London]. See p. 318, n. 3, and p. 319, n. 6.

Canadians had been killed with the Irroques and scalped, one of their heads was also cut off. The Indian found two Fall Indians waiting there where they was killed; he asked them the reason of their being there and they said that they was looking out for more Irroques as they thought that more might be behind and that we wanted to keep it secret that they might arrive safe. Men's employ as yesterday.¹

March 13, Saturday. Men as usual and cleaned the yard.²

March 14, Sunday. Light breezes at east, clear and cool.

March 15, Monday. Two men tailoring. Some planing wedges for the press, and the rest getting timbers for a bateau.³

March 16, Tuesday. Men as yesterday and finished getting timbers.⁴

March 17, Wednesday. Men sawing and chopping timbers and otherwise employed.

March 18, Thursday. Men's employ as yesterday.

March 19, Friday. Twenty-two Muddy River Indian chiefs, one Blood Indian and fourteen Blackfeet came in;⁵ they all have but very little with them on account of the severe cold winter and the very deep snow. Sawing, chopping timbers, and cleaned about the gates.

March 20, Saturday. A Muddy River Indian⁶ came in, and also the Blackfoot that went to Edmonton House returned, and Mr Bird says that the pemmican made there is exceedingly little;⁷ we shall get whatever we can here. Indians trading. A little water on the river.

March 21, Sunday. Several of the Indians traded and went away, and seven Blackfeet and two Fall Indians came in to trade.⁸

¹ Fidler went into much greater detail in B.39/a/2. The Indian found more than a hundred wolves in the vicinity.

² *Ibid.*, 'Told Mr Wills yesterday to set his men to saw boards for a Batteaux, he will be under the necessity of making Skin Canoes had he not a batto, & they cannot paddle to make any way at all in them, it will be necessary for us when we leave this to make what dispatch we can for at least 5 or 6 Days, to get out of the reach of the Fall Inds. as they are very badly inclined towards us'.

³ *Ibid.*, 'Finished Mr Ballenden Map from YF to Edmo. House'. No trace of this map has been found in any of the Company's catalogues. From Fidler's brief description it appears to have been connected with (1) the journey he made from York Factory to Buckingham House, 25 July to 14 October 1792, and (2) the journey he made from Buckingham House to 'the Tea, Sturgeon or Red Willow River [near site of the first Edmonton House] . . .' and back 1-11 April 1793. The journals of these journeys are in E.3/1, pp. 134-90 and E.3/2, pp. 70-5 respectively.

⁴ Mr Wills's men were preparing timber for a bateau. B.39/a/2.

⁵ Fidler listed the names of thirty-six of the Indians on fo. 94 of his rough journal, B.39/a/2.

⁶ Toby. *Ibid.*

⁷ P. 310, and n. 3. The returning Blackfoot brought Fidler 'Letters from Messrs Bird, Howse & Pruden, with mine & the mens European Letters [of 1801]'. B.39/a/2. No trace has been found of the letters from Bird, Howse and Pruden.

⁸ B.39/a/2, 'Mr Wills had debauched one of our Indians he had 10 Large & 13 Small Beaver Skins the reasons he gave for it appears satisfactory. The river Ice all overflowed we suppose that the river is broke up far up the river, occasions it as no thaw has been here sufficient to produce so much water. The Muddy River Inds. says that near the Mountain no snow has been there this 2 months & that the Geese &c has been long in numbers there'.

March 22, Monday. The river ice quite overflowed. Traded with the Indians and they all went away except one man and his wife. Tailor at his duty and the rest variously employed.

March 23, Tuesday. All hands employed packing furs, both in the inner and outer press. Packed twenty bundles containing 1580 made beaver.¹

March 24, Wednesday. Ground clear of snow in places. All hands as yesterday and packed twenty-two bundles containing 1672 made beaver.² The Indian and his wife went away.

March 25, Thursday. Men as before, and packed twenty-two bundles containing the same as yesterday. Four Blood and four Blackfeet came in with furs.³

March 26, Friday. Men the same, and packed twenty-two bundles containing as yesterday 1672 made beaver. Indians traded and went away.

March 27, Saturday. Cleaned the yard and about the gates without and doing other necessary duty about the house.⁴

March 28, Sunday. Cold winds easterly and freezing.

March 29, Monday. Made twenty bags of pemmican.⁵

March 30, Tuesday. Water rising very fast in the rivers. Men variously employed, making soap etc. etc.

March 31, Wednesday. Men as yesterday, and picking oakum to caulk our boats and new bateau with.⁶

¹ Each bundle (amounting to 79 made beaver in value) contained: 12 wolf skins, 140 grey and 1 red fox skins, and 1 good cat skin. *Ibid.*

² Each bundle (amounting to 76 made beaver in value) contained: 14 wolf skins, 130 small fox skins, 2 red fox skins, and 1 good cat skin. *Ibid.*

³ Mr Wills made fifty-four 85-lb. bags of pemmican. *Ibid.*

⁴ According to Fidler's rough journal (B.39/a/2) twenty-three pemmican bags were made and in store there were 307 lbs. fat in kettles, 338 lbs. marrow, 443 lbs. back fat, and 100 lbs. bad fat. Also (*ibid.*, fo. 94) he 'Gave Ben Bruce for Hunting': 1½ yards red and 1½ yards blue corded cloth; 1 three-point blanket; 1 yew-handled, 2 butcher, 4 common clasp and 2 double-bladed knives; 1 large horn and 2 ivory combs; 24 stone rings; 1½ lbs. beads of colours; 20 yards gartering; 1 quart powder; 50 ball; 10 flints; 2 worms; 2 steels; 3 awls; 6 papers of paint; 1 pair brass wrist bands; 3 fathoms 'brit.' Brazil tobacco; 2 small silk handkerchiefs; 1 looking glass; 1 pair scissors and 3 pairs ear bobs.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Mr Wills put up his Beaver press without our gates. The 2 Old Comps. men & 3 of ours took up part of their things put in the ground last spring, several others they cannot find the spot exactly where it was laid up . . . the rest made 20 bags of Pemmican & 3 for myself 2 of Saskutten Berries contg. 8 gallons of Berries each bag weighs 101 lbs. & a Bag with 26 lbs. of Hard berries, the weight of it 83 lbs.'

⁶ *Ibid.*, 'finished Mr Leans map to the Mountain & Mr Ballendens & tied them both up'. The map for Alexander Lean must have been of the journey from Buckingham House to the Rockies and back made by Fidler 8 November 1792 to 20 March 1793. See p. 317, n. 4. From an examination of the entries listing maps in the catalogue A.64/52, pp. 181-2, it appears highly probable that the map Fidler was preparing for Lean in 1802 was another version of the one referred to in n. 7, p. lvi. The *King George* carrying 'some Maps & Papers' sent by Fidler in 1802 arrived in London on 23 October (C.4/1, fo. 16). By 17 December Lean was writing to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, and to Alexander Dalrymple, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, saying that Fidler's maps and papers were deposited with Mr [Aaron] Arrowsmith (the cartographer), and that it would be highly satisfactory to the Company if these should be of sufficient importance to attract their notice. In the letter to Banks, Lean said, 'Mr Arrowsmith . . . considers them as important in ascertaining, with some

April 1, Thursday. Four men making wedges and mallets for the press. Three finished making soap. Two repairing tents for the summer and the boats sails, and the rest picking oakum and cleaned out the yard.

April 2, Friday. Men employed as yesterday. Five Blackfeet came in with furs, they all have very little with them. Rigged the chief of the Blackfoot nation.¹

April 3, Saturday. Early this morning the ice in the Red Deers River gave way, and the water rose many feet perpendicular. The Bad River still stands firm. Eight Blackfeet came in with a few furs, this gang is the last that will be here this season; rigged some of them.

April 4, Sunday. Water falling off above a foot perpendicular each hour in the Red Deer's River. Indians traded and they all went away except one man² and his wife, which we detained till we should embark, to look about and see if the Fall Indians are lurking anywhere nigh us. Ice driving down the Bad River.

April 5, Monday. Men variously employed, doing several kinds of necessary duty.

April 6, Tuesday. Men as yesterday and laid sleepers to build our bateau upon.

April 7, Wednesday. Men as before.³

April 8, Thursday. Laid the bottom of our bateau, 34 feet long by 7½ foot wide. Picking oakum and caulking our boats etc. etc.⁴

April 9, Friday. Men's employ as yesterday and got all the timbers set up in the bateau.⁵

April 10, Saturday. Men's employ as before.

April 11, Sunday. Thick snow, with very cold weather.

April 12, Monday. Thick snow. Men employed within doors, packed up in the inner press twenty-four bundles of furs. We have none now unpacked, our trade is 7495 made beaver.⁶

April 13, Tuesday. Employed making the bateau, packing the furs, etc.

degree of certainty, the sources of the Missouri, they also convey much curious Information respecting the Face of many Countries hitherto unknown to Europeans'. A.5/4, fos. 103d., 104. The replies to these letters are not in the Company's archives. Fidler's maps and papers were not catalogued before being sent to Arrowsmith and were apparently never returned to the Company.

¹ Feathers. B.39/a/2.

² Little Bear. Two young men were also detained. Little Bear was to be sent to the North Saskatchewan River 'to advertise the people there of the Beheaviour of the Fall Inds.'. *Ibid.*

³ 'Made 1 bag of Pemmican with stone berries 128 lbs., only 2 bladders of fatt remg. & a 4 Gall. Keg'. *Ibid.*

⁴ The North West Company's goods en cache were found. *Ibid.*

⁵ B.39/a/2, 'Made a Carriage to the small Cannon & fired 2 shots out of it loaded with the first 25 & 2d, 20 ball each lead & powder ¾ of ½ pint . . . Taylor makg. 2 pair of Trousers for Mr Wills, began to copy my Journal'. Fidler presumably meant that he was preparing the official copy (printed here) from the B.39/a/2 version.

⁶ This figure agrees with that in the York Factory account book, B.239/d/124, fo. 23d.

April 14, Wednesday. Got all the boards round the bateau and *finished* packing the furs. Much ice driving down the Bad River.

April 15, Thursday. Three men caulking the boats,¹ five at the bateau and put in gunwales and thafts, four fettling the bundles of furs and the rest packing up our remains of trading goods, as now we think that the Fall Indians will not be here again to trade. The Blackfeet that was here the last says that every Fall Indian with their families are pitched away for the Mis sis su rie River, and there to meet the Crow Mountain and Tattoo Indians and make a very formidable party, and that they will then come to fall upon us and proceed down the country to find the Crees and Stone Indians and kill what they can of them in revenge of the last summer.²

April 16, Friday. Got the bateau ready for caulking, and the rest making things ready for embarking. The Indian man here goes on hunting daily but cannot find any buffalo, and our meat here is beginning to turn little, and no more Indians are now expected here by the lateness of the season. We shall therefore embark as soon as the bateau is ready for putting on the water.

April 17, Saturday. Six men caulking the bateau, three pitching one boat, and the rest variously employed.

April 18, Sunday. Strong gales westerly and very hot.

April 19, Monday. Six men finished caulking the bateau and the rest pitching the other boat, and otherwise employed.

April 20, Tuesday. Got the bateau down to the water's edge and six men pitching her, also got our two boats down. Packed up everything and laid out the cargoes³ ready to embark tomorrow.⁴

P. Fidler.

[Meteorological Observations at Chesterfield House and index to chief events in journal not printed.]

¹ There were two boats and one bateau. B.39/a/2, entries for 15, 16, 17 and 20 April. On fo. 83 Fidler listed the cargoes of the *Buffalo* and *Martin* and of the bateau (unnamed).

² At the end of his journal (B.39/a/2, fo. 94d.) Fidler noted that on 15 April 1802 he paid 'the Bear' for furs valued 6½ made beaver, 5 pemmican bags, an old tent, for looking after the Company's horses, for hunting and other services: 5½ fathoms Brazil tobacco, 3½ lbs. carrot tobacco, 14 lbs. powder, 120 ball, 7 flints, 5 yew-handled knives, 6 'Womans' knives, 1 wrist band, 1 looking glass, 6 horse bells, 30 hawks bells, 4 awls, 2 steels, 2 worms, 6 papers of paint, 1 lb. beads, 2 combs, 1 file, 30 rings, 1 3-beaver coat, 9 gallons brandy, 1 each 'Young mens feathers', 1 tobacco box, 1 pair scissors, 1 hatchet and 1½ yards red corded cloth.

³ Fidler listed on fo. 82d. of B.39/a/2 the remaining trading goods which he took away. These goods, amounting to forty pieces, and thirty-one guns were sent to 'the Island where Mr Hallett winters'. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1802.

⁴ In his rough journal (B.39/a/2) Fidler recorded that his party and the XY Company men, numbering together thirty-seven men, left on 21 April. Also, he remarked, 'in burning our doors for the nails the chips caught fire & for want of attention communicated to the Watch house & I suppose has burnt the house all down', and added later, 'The House & all is standing by the Inds. Account March 1805'.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

TRADE RETURNS FROM YORK FACTORY

1796-1802

(*In made beaver*)

	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802
Acton House	—	—	—	—	2,289	3,551	1,368
Summerberry River	—	—	—	—	—	991	closed
Nelson House	—	—	—	—	295	1,212	closed
Edmonton House	8,226	12,512	10,755	10,889	4,822	2,087	1,756
Island House	—	—	—	—	—	1,208	1,071
Buckingham House	2,200	2,791	2,838	2,997	1,972	closed	closed
Somerset House	—	—	—	—	983	closed	closed
Setting River	—	—	—	} 1,653	closed	closed	closed
Carlton House	1,406	1,963	1,253		1,273	974	closed
Cumberland House	1,146	559	1,230	2,158	1,587	2,860	1,657
Chesterfield House	—	—	—	—	—	12,000	7,495
Bolsover House	—	—	—	—	190	closed	closed
Greenwich House	—	—	—	—	1,073	83	closed
Swan River District	2,100	1,506	1,875	729	1,048	closed	closed
Jack River	—	1,196	833	757	closed	closed	closed
Oxford House	—	—	—	2,254	2,414	3,026	2,400
Merry's House	—	—	—	—	—	850	1,200
Gordon House	?	1,588	1,157	410	441	420	closed
Nelson or North River	2,687	3,482	4,513	5,001	5,501	3,000	4,000
Ross and Thompson — towards Athabasca	2,005	1,503	abandoned				
York Factory	13,492	14,199	11,586	5,127	7,934	6,766	8,390
	33,262	41,299	36,040	31,975	31,822	39,028	29,337
Severn	10,771	6,005	5,304	5,006	6,040	5,200	5,000
	44,043	47,304	41,344	36,981	37,862	44,228	34,337

Compiled from: B.239/d/108, 113, 115, 117, 120, 123, 124. Cf. B.239/b/79, *passim*, A.1/47 and 48 *passim*. The accounting year at York Factory ran from 1 August to 31 July.

APPENDIX B

CARGOES OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S SHIPS

*(Issued by Messrs Webber & Oakey, 9 December
1801 from Hudson's Bay House, London)¹*

1801.		AR	MR	EM	YF	SR	CR	Totals
Beaver, Coat	lbs.	263	21	10	620	167	325	1406
Do. Parchment Whole Skins		6985	2515	1242	7600	1736	2766	22844
Do. Do. Cub		3995	1764	576	2400	630	1044	10409
Martin		6154	3753	3931	2900	3250	2961	22949
Otter		1232	400	634	616	277	327	3486
Cat		669	171	51	2363	36	1205	4495
Fox		1366	154	386	30513	71	264	32754
Wolverin		50	1	44	235	11	125	466
Black Bear		232	69	132	130	4	47	614
White Do.		19	1	17	—	17	4	58
Wolf		920	1	20	2096	8	77	3122
Fisher		256	82	—	49	—	6	393
Mink		422	221	127	188	6	109	1073
Raccoon		803	236	830	460	—	—	2329
Musquash		6017	6626	2620	460	57	114	15894
Deer and Elk		496	—	24	370	670	1082	2642
Rabbit		2260	2440	6840	11453	1600	7	24600
Squirrel		90	—	240	42	—	103	475
Castorum	lbs.	185	129	82	216	50	57	719
Feathers		848	470	680	—	—	430	2428
Quills		36600	16200	50200	—	—	18000	121000
Whale and Seal Oil	Casks	—	—	—	—	—	24	24

For Sale. — 20th January next. Coat & Parchment Beaver, Rabbit, Deer Elk, Castorum, Goose Quills, Bed Feathers, and Train Oil. 10th March. Coat Beaver & Sundry Furs, as will be specified in their printed Catalogues.

¹ A.53/1, fo. 2d.

APPENDIX C

GENERAL STATE OF TRADE

COMPILED AT YORK FACTORY, 1801

	<i>Skins</i>	<i>M. Beaver</i> ¹
Beaver Whole parchment	7600	7600
Half Do.	2400	1200
Badgers	455	227½
Bears Old	112	336
Middling	16	32
Cub	2	2
Cats prime	2336	4672
Common	27	27
Castorum	lbs. 216	108
Coat & Scrap Beaver	„ 620	496
Deer Buck	150	150
Doe	184	92
Fishers Large	4	4
Common	45	22½
Foxes Cross	70	140
Grizzled	36	108
Red	751	751
Small Grey	29648	14824
White	8	4
Martins prime	2250	1125
Common	650	216⅔
Minks	188	94
Musquashes	460	76⅔
Moose parchment	36	72
Otters prime	583	1166
Common	19	19
Cub	14	7
Rabbets	11453	1431⅔
Skunks	5	2½
Squirrels	42	2
Wolves	2099	2099
Wolverines	235	470
Moose Dress'd Used at YF	125	250
Deer Buck Do. Do.	76	76
Doe	138	69
Furs sent Home last Year belongg. to this Years Trade		1055⅞
		39027⅞
Furs from Severn		5200
		44227⅞

¹ B.239/d/123, fo. 29. Cf. the figures given for 1801 in Appendixes A and B.

APPENDIX D

AMOUNTS REALISED AT HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY SALES, 1797-1803

<i>Cargo</i>	<i>Made Beaver</i>	<i>Sales held</i>	<i>Total realised</i>	<i>'Sundry Accounts' in Grand Journal credited:</i>
1796	89,174	1797 (3)	£54,449 6. 6.	Albany £15,211 12. 0, Moose £5903 7. 2, Eastmain £5692 0. 4, York £23,587 11. 6, Churchill £3432 0. 3, Goods left from previous sales £622 15. 3. Goods unsold valued £3955 17. 5.
1797	95,144	1798 (2)	£62,096 3. 10.	Albany £16,274 16. 6, Moose £5575 11. 5, Eastmain £5482 15. 9, York £28,156 3. 6, Churchill £4124 10. 9, Goods left from previous sales £2482 5. 11. Goods unsold valued £821 13. 10.
1798	87,586	1799 (2)	£57,970 8. 6.	Albany £18,173 18. 0, Moose £4684 15. 6, Eastmain £4185 8. 6, York £25,959 12. 0, Churchill £4268 5. 0, Eskimo trade £89 6. 6. Goods left from previous sales £609 3. 0.
1799	89,289	1799 (1) 1800 (2)	£69,131 9. 1.	Albany £22,477 10. 2, Moose £6275 1. 6, Eastmain £5748 8. 10, York £28,462 12. 11, Churchill £6133 3. 8, Eskimo trade £34 12. 0.
1800	85,201	1801 (3)	£59,068 15. 8.	Albany £15,193 5. 5, Moose £7383 1. 2, Eastmain £6238 16. 10, York £23,062 11. 1, Churchill £7122 15. 2, Eskimo trade £68 6. 0.
1801	94,105	1802 (2)	£65,527 19. 6.	Albany £18,250 14. 10, Moose £7902 5. 5, Eastmain £7366 8. 2, York £24,334 7. 0, Churchill £7674 4. 1. Goods unsold valued 'at last Sale price' £2208 4. 0.
1802	80,380	1802 (1) 1803 (2)	£64,894 4. 5.	Albany £19,795 7. 9, Moose £5149 3. 5, Eastmain £6939 11. 7, York £26,140 0. 11, Churchill £6870 0. 9. Goods unsold valued £1618 17. 3.

Compiled from the 'Comparative Account of the Cargoes from all the Factories' for each year in A.1/47, 48; from A.15/15, 16; A.5/4, p. 141. Cf. A.48/7, fos. 17-99 and B.239/d/108-124. For the printed conditions of the sale held on 22 December 1802, see A.63/5, fo. 10.

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